

PlayStation 3 PSN PSVita PSP 演劇端末

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ISSUE NO 213
THE ENGLISH ROSE

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EXCLUSIVE

"DRAKE COULD DIE"

Naughty Dog's shock confession about Uncharted's future

TOMB RAIDER

STUNNING TRUTH BEHIND THE GAME SET TO ROCK PS3

TECH TRICKS

61 WAYS TO BOOST YOUR PS3

Supercharge your console

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- UFC UNDISPUTED 3
- SOULCALIBUR V
- RESISTANCE: BURNING SKIES
- RAINBOW SIX
- SF X TEKKEN

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UFC[®] UNDISPUTED 3



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Skills: Boxing, Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu



BRIAN STANN

Former WEC light heavyweight champion and decorated Captain in the US Marines.

Record: 11-3-0

Skills: Strength / athleticism

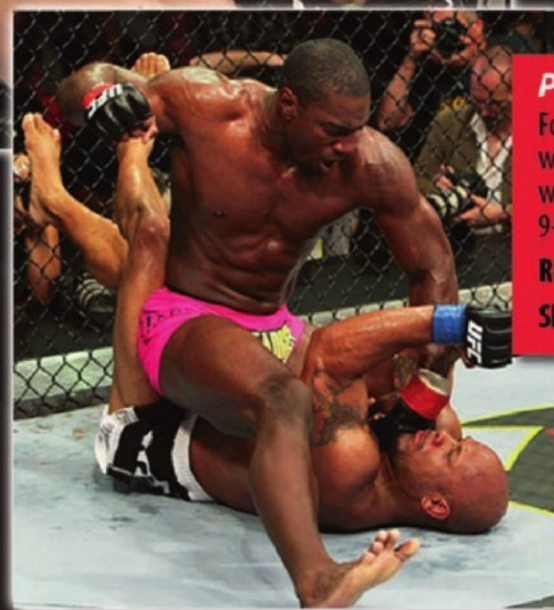


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84 **NEED FOR SPEED: THE RUN** PS3

In the time it takes you to read this mag, you could have completed *Need For Speed: The Run*. Twice. Truth!

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Imagine if you loved FPS games but didn't want *Modern Warfare 3* and *Battlefield 3*. Oh hey, guess what.

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Someone in our office genuinely tried arguing that the combat in this was better than *Skyrim*. LOL, etc.

90 **LEGO HARRY POTTER: YEARS 5-7** PS3

If it's not *Lego Pirates* or *Lego Indiana Jones*, we don't care. That's the new rule on *Play*. We think it's a good rule.

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Remember PS2 curio *Rabbit King*? Look it up on YouTube. Now imagine that with *Move*. Hey! It's *Carnival Island*!

92 **MEDIEVAL MOVES** PS3

Shockingly, not as good as Sony said it was. We know. We can't believe it either.

93 **THE KING OF FIGHTERS XIII** PS3

If you like old-school fighting games, you have this already. Read our words anyway! They're good words.



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PLAYHD
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- LOTR: War In The North
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All the latest from the online gaming world

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reviews

Hear what the Play team sounds like!

- Need For Speed: The Run
- Tekken Hybrid
- King Of Fighters XIII

hi-def content

How to watch the delicious high-definition content included free on your Play DVD...

STEP ONE

Open DVD and navigate to *On the Play* DVD-ROM

STEP TWO

Click where it says *Click here to open DVD-ROM folder*

STEP THREE

Open the folder that says *HD Trailers*

STEP FOUR

Just double-click the trailer you want to watch!

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96 PAYDAY: THE HEIST

It's the good bits of *Kane & Lynch* (the multiplayer) without the bad (the rest).

96 ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE: NEVER DIE ALONE

Are there enough zombie games about? Who cares! Have another!

97 WORMS CRAZY GOLF

Team17 has given up with 3D and decided to make a golf spin-off instead.

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Made by one man. One! And it's actually pretty bloody good.

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We take an in-depth look at *BioShock Infinite's* top girl.

INSTALL

Where fact + opinion ÷ PlayStation = the truth

THE YEAR OF T

SONY FANS REJOICE – THERE ARE **29** EXCLUSIVES TO GET STUCK INTO...



PLAYSTATION 3

The big exclusive Sony will be leading with next year is *The Last Guardian* (1) but that doesn't mean it's the only platform exclusive leading the charge. *Dust 514* (2), *Twisted Metal* (3) and *Ni No Kuni* (4) are right behind it. There are also big questions heading into next year. What of *Agent* (5), Rockstar's big exclusive that was announced early in PlayStation 3's life? Or *Final Fantasy Versus XIII* (6), the dormant Square Enix project?

IN THIS ISSUE: Sly Cooper: Thieves In Time (7), Starhawk (8), Yakuza: Dead Souls (9)



TWISTED METAL



DUST 514



PSVITA

Lots can pass as exclusives here. For example, FIFA will double up as exclusive just because it will sport genuinely unique control methods on Vita but the likes of *Little Deviants* (10), *Escape Plan* (11), *Sound Shapes* (12), *Frobisher Says* (13), *Reality Fighters* (14) and *Shinobido 2: Tales Of The Ninja* (15) won't be found elsewhere.

IN THIS ISSUE: Resistance (16), Uncharted: Golden Abyss (17), ModNation Racers (18), MotorStorm RC (19), Unit 13 (20), Touch My Katamari (21), Super Stardust Delta (22)



ESCAPE PLAN



LITTLE DEVIANTS



PSN

There are three intriguing titles on the horizon amongst the exclusives. *Ruin* (23) is a dungeon crawler that's been grabbing attention due to its crossover potential with PS Vita, letting you pick up where you left off on either platform. *Machinarium* (24) is a puzzle point-and-click that will be something of a critical darling when released. *PixelJunk 4am* (25) sees you swinging the PlayStation Move to visualise music, both that included and your own.

IN THIS ISSUE: Payday: The Heist (26), Zombie Apocalypse: Never Die Alone (27), Beat Hazard Ultra (28), PixelJunk SideScroller (29)



MACHINARIUM



PIXELJUNK 4AM

Need To Know IMPORTANT GAMING NEWS YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS



Whore Of The Orient

No, that's not us deliberately being controversial. Rather, it's the new project of *L.A. Noire* producer Brendan McNamara, moving on following the break-up of Team Bondi. *Orient* will be backed by KNM Studios and it's likely the facial animation of *L.A. Noire* will return, as McNamara owns the tech.



BF3 owners get BF 1943

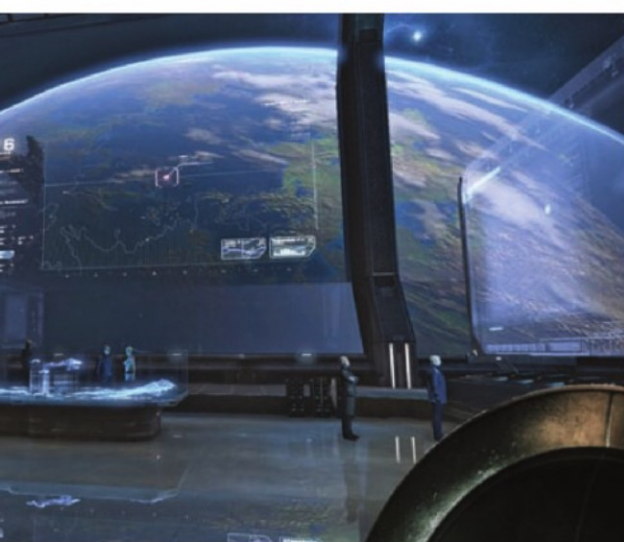
They offered it, then they didn't, now EA is offering *Battlefield 1943* as a free download for *Battlefield 3* owners yet again. It was likely the threat of legal action from angry owners that spurred it into the gesture but no matter – the complicated redemption instructions can be found here: <http://bit.ly/u7cRa8>



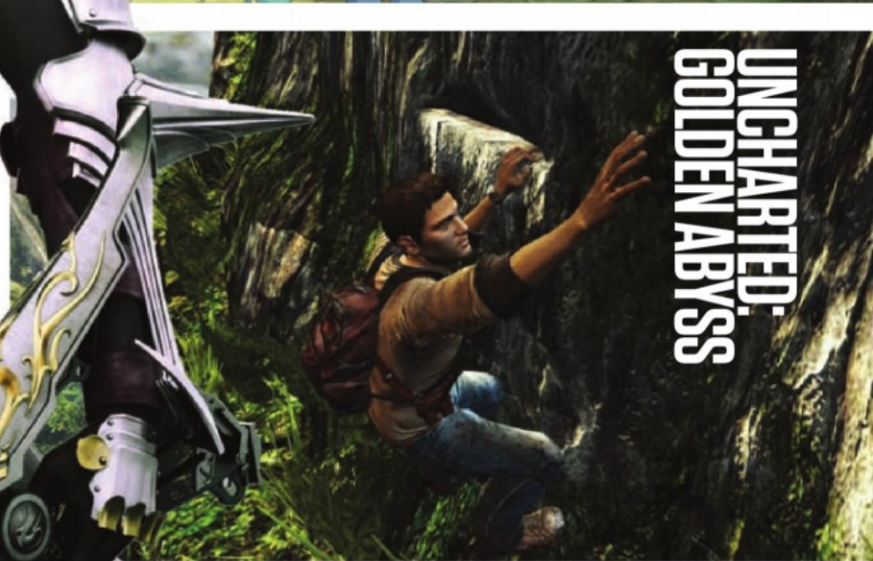
Lego Batman 2 outed

Some promotional art for *Lego Batman 2* has been uncovered, showing that if it's real, Batman will be joined by DC stars Superman, Green Lantern and Wonder Woman. *Lego Harry Potters: Years 5-7* has just been released to lukewarm reviews – hopefully, *Lego Batman 2* will improve on it.

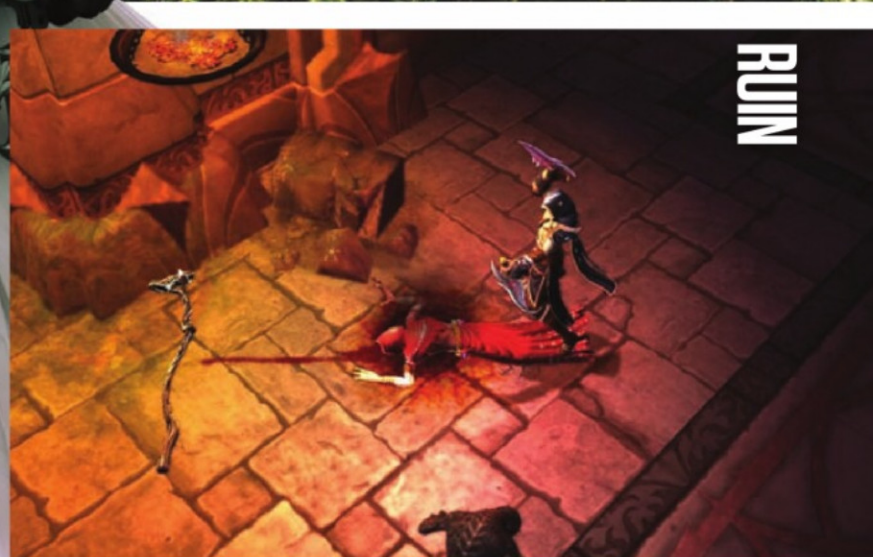
THE EXCLUSIVE



NIO KUNI



UNCHARTED:
GOLDEN ABYSS



RUIN

INSTALL

YOUTUBE.COM/
PLAYMAGUK 

To those of you who are complaining without even giving the game a chance, Rockstar has been talking to Remedy behind the scenes getting feedback and advice from them. Hell, even the CEO of Remedy posted that he liked what he'd seen.
GAMERZWORLD

YOUR SHOUT MAX PAYNE 3

1. @PEPSI_PUNK

Looking forward to it, Rockstar do good stories so hopefully they don't forget what gameplay aspects made the first two so good.

2. @HELLO_CAMO

Everything is cooler in slow motion so bullet time never got old with me. I'm looking forward to more geriatric-paced shooting.

3. @METALPAUL1000

I am looking forward to it. Gritty. Cool slo-mo shooting. I'm confident in the devs to bring old Max in to 2012. Loved the first two.

4. @VISCOVITZ

Looks a bit generic. Plus do we really need ANOTHER third-person action game? Maybe if Naughty Dog were involved...

5. @THETRIBE BRAND

Max Payne 3 should be awesome!! Always loved how dark the previous games were and hope they keep up that tone! :-)

6. @REALSOZ

John Woo Gun Diving FTW

facebook .com/playmagazineuk

Ben Morrison I hope they make him fat and shave his head to highlight a change in mood in the game. Oh wait, they have, just like every other game where they want to 'grow up' a character – no one needs another *Kane & Lynch*. Sure it will be fun but formulaic. Hopefully it still has the harrowing drug/fear induced hallucinogenic corridor scenes too. ANYWAY, that's all. BYE.

Paul Hayes A lot of people are unhappy with the setting citing that it won't have a noir feel; I think that's an unimaginative complaint. While the sunny setting might impact it visually that's not to say it won't contain the usual noir tropes.

Daniel Gough Loved the original *Max Paynes*, and hope this is as brutal as the others. I'm gonna bring the Payne!

PLAY ONLINE

You can find us skiving/working/engaging with the community (delete as appropriate) at [Facebook.com/PlayMagazineUK](https://www.facebook.com/PlayMagazineUK), [@PlayMag_UK](https://www.youtube.com/playmagUK) and [youtube.com/playmagUK](https://www.youtube.com/playmagUK)

INSTANT EXPERT

All of the pros with none of the prose

THE 'BAD' ENDING

If you had feet for hands or never played a game before, it was possible to have everyone die at the end of *Mass Effect 2*, with the only survivor being disabled pilot Joker. What if that was your ending? How will *Mass Effect 3* acknowledge it?

FINAL COUNTDOWN:

As the final chapter, expect to see your decisions pay-off – the Rachni Queen, the Citadel fan, the Kaiden or Ashley choice, the Asari stripper you watched for three hours. Wait. We've said too much. DELETE.

ACTION OR RPG?

The general consensus was *Mass Effect 2* nudged the series towards action while the original had a bit more in the way of RPG interaction. Which way will *Mass Effect 3* go? Does anyone really believe it won't be massive explosions and action?

PLAY AS THANE!

Well, play as a drell in multiplayer. But Thane! Yes! We'll shout his famous lines in his voice as we play. "The measure of an individual can be difficult to discern by actions alone!" Maybe not that one. Hmmm. We'll come back to this later.

MULTIPLAYER'S HERE!

And it's okay. "Add multiplayer that journalists describe as okay!" probably wasn't the directive thumped down from the EA overlords to the BioWare studios but we have Horde mode now and it's not bad.

DLC POTENTIAL

While *Lair Of The Shadow Broker* was brilliant, the DLC costumes? You could show them off to no one but yourself and feel empty at how lonely your life has become. Now multiplayer is in, however, expect more DLC along these lines.

MASS EFFECT 3

Developer BioWare
Publisher EA • ETA March

NO SPOILERS PLEASE

The entire script for *Mass Effect 3* was found after Russian hackers cracked the leaked beta. We won't spoil it for you but the script suggests your actions won't have that dramatic an effect on things. BioWare has since stated the script is out of date.

LEAKED BETA

Although they've been doing a good job hushing up those who spotted it, a beta for *Mass Effect 3* accidentally leaked on Xbox 360 when Microsoft opened a private testing for its new dashboard. While clearly not finished, there was a lot of action over RPG elements.

twitterwatch



@ShawnElliott

"How many marketing research companies that studios consult rely on methodologies no statistician or behavioral psychologist could condone?"

@PlayMag_UK says: The level designer for Irrational Games stops work on *BioShock Infinite* to tweet this. FEEL THE ANGER.

YAKUZA: DEAD SOULS SHOULD SEGA STOP?



Sega has seen a dramatic change of direction since the days when it handed Yu Suzuki the GDP of five countries to develop *Shenmue II*. The story is that every Dreamcast owner needed to buy *Shenmue II* twice for it to turn a profit. Which was a problem as not many people bought it once. This is why Sega now publishes *Thor* and *Captain America*. Blame Dreamcast owners.



But Sega also makes *Yakuza*! Probably to stop people emailing *Shenmue III* questions but we don't know as we don't work for Sega. We ask Sega every time it visits our offices if it's brought *Shenmue III* down. Sega will scowl in response, so we do that polite laughter thing in response. It's our defensive mechanism in socially awkward situations, see.



Point is, *Yakuza* is the closest Sega has come to the open-but-sort-of-closed world of *Shenmue*, where the joy isn't so much in the story missions but the abundance of filler – eating noodles, playing arcades, going shopping. We've made *Yakuza* sound like the worst game ever but it's got a quirkiness that's been lost in the industry's drive for triple-A COD imitations.



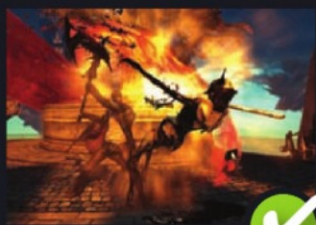
And now it's got zombies in, too! Pity it doesn't also have eye-lasers and an octopus in a chicken hat but we may be confusing our own personal wish list with what might actually make a good game, like when we told Naughty Dog Drake needs a move where he does a Chinese burn. It's only now we realise Naughty Dog were laughing at us, not with us. Sigh.

Answer: It's exclusive, it's got zombies, it's the closest thing we have to *Shenmue*. Please continue, Sega

DOS & DON'TS

Important lessons from Play this month

Read our reviews of all these games starting on page 83



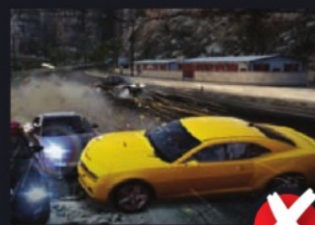
DO: Look at the exclusive screenshots we have on *DmC*. You won't see them anywhere else! Unless you work at Capcom.



DON'T: Book a day off work to play *Need For Speed: The Run*. You'll be calling them and asking to come back in by 12.



DO: Get our Play magazine app if you have an iPhone or iPad. Unless there are new *Angry Birds* levels out.



DON'T: Book another day off work to play *Need For Speed: The Run*. It really is that short. And you'll still end up back in work.



STREET FIGHTER X TEKKEN GETS WILD

Q&A

Seth Killian, Capcom's special advisor for their fighting game projects, talks squeezing Tekken into a Street Fighter game, Namco revenge and Star Gladiator



For *Street Fighter X Tekken*, have you struggled at all trying to work Tekken characters into a very focused *Street Fighter* template?

We've made a small nod to the *Tekken* side, but overall it's more of a *Street Fighter* game. In terms of overall balance, every *Tekken* character has the ability to dodge within the third dimension, be that a dodge or avoiding a projectile. Only Raven, right now, on the *Tekken* side has a projectile because that sort of makes sense. The *Tekken* guys don't really have ranged attacks so we gave them a way of getting around that. But you still have to judge the distance properly so that's the dichotomy. Team *Street Fighter* has the stronger projectiles and the *Tekken* guys have stronger mix-up gameplay, and once they do get inside, they make you guess a lot more.

How much involvement does Namco have in the project?

We actually did tell them which characters we were going to put in the game just to make sure they didn't really hate that, but other than that pretty much zero and we're going to do the same when they make their game. It's one of those rare situations where we say, 'You're cool, we're cool, let's just do this.' We both trust each other with these big brands so we don't send them any review builds or anything like that. Sometimes they come by and check out the progress but if they don't like it, tough. They'll have to take revenge in their game [laughs]. We're respectful of the franchise and we want to get it right for the *Tekken* fans as well.

Do you think there's room for a new fighting franchise in the modern gaming era?

I think there is, and we certainly have the talent and the ideas to do it. I'm not sure if fans of our franchises that are not currently active would ever forgive that. I don't know if they would ever accept a new franchise from us as they'd probably say, 'But you could've brought back *Star Gladiator*!' Then 400 *Star Gladiator* fans would then rally and be bitter at us for leaving that by the wayside, and then criticise any new characters. We're sort of challenged by our own success in that regard but we have such strong characters with such long legacies that people don't want to move away from them.

We do try and introduce new characters into existing franchises but I think we definitely have the ideas in terms of mechanics. A game like *Street Fighter X Tekken* lets us go a little outside that, because it's definitely not a *Tekken* game and it's not really a *Street Fighter* game.

Can we expect any more characters from both the *Street Fighter* and *Tekken* side?

We have a few months till release with this game and we plan to announce characters right up to the finish line. The character select screen will be covered with characters, so we have quite a lot still to come including some from *Street Fighter* history that have not been in a game for quite some time, so we want to make both sets of fans happy.

Do you have a final number?

I do but not one I'm going to share today [laughs]. I think, overall, it'll be almost impossible to be disappointed with the number of characters in the roster. This is the most robust roster we've had for a *Street Fighter* game. I don't want to say ever because someone will get me if I say that, but it's a lot of characters.

You can never please everyone, though, right?

You're right. I see it as disappointment minimisation. You're never going to make everybody happy. We always go big across the high-profile characters but we also like to go where people aren't expecting with more obscure characters. We also want to get characters that people on the team feel excited about, too. You'll have advocates for certain characters on the team who will be like, 'This is my guy and I have all these cool ideas for what he could do' and we try and respect that as well. You can be hand-guided by fans but you want to have the same passion on team. If you're just making characters other people are passionate about but you're not, that's not ideal, so I like to see it as the fans have a voice at the table. We learned our lesson with *Street Fighter III*, which was 'don't cut all the fan favourites from the game' [laughs]. We try and balance it all out and ultimately make a game that's fun, because even if you have everyone's favourite character but the game isn't fun, then you're nowhere.



“ Saints Row: The Third might have dildos and toilets-in-Tron crossovers but it's not the wildest Saints Row title ever ”

ASSASSIN'S CREED III & SAINTS ROW 4

Massive sequels already announced – here's what we know!

You may have only just heard the plastic clunk of *Assassin's Creed Revelations* hitting shelves but Ubisoft has already pointed us towards its sequel, which will be a 'proper' *Assassin's Creed* sequel for all intents and purposes.

"There will be another great full-fledged *Assassin's Creed* title next year," said Ubisoft CEO Yves Guillemot, slightly undermining the just-been-released *Assassin's Creed Revelations*. "It will be another major release and we will be communicating more about it in the coming months."

When we say proper sequel, that's not to say *Revelations* is a fake sequel but rather, the next *Assassin's Creed* will properly revamp things. So we're not the only ones who thought it was becoming a bit tired. The timing of the release also makes sense because Desmond learns that the end of the world is predicted to happen in December 2012, while Ezio and Altair's stories have been wrapped up in *Revelations*. It's no big surprise to see a new *Assassin's Creed* on the cards so soon. The shock here was that

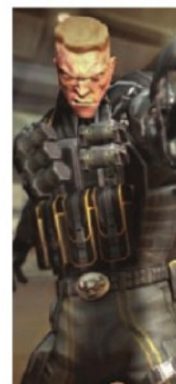
Ubisoft would announce it so soon after the release of *Revelations*, rather than another sequel actually existing.

What is a surprise, though, is the sequel THQ has announced. You might be playing *Saints Row: The Third* and enjoying the dildos, passenger-seat tigers slapping you and toilets-in-Tron crossovers because why not? Yet it's not the wildest game ever made. It's not even the wildest *Saints Row* ever. No, that award goes to *Saints Row 4*, which has already been confirmed by THQ's executive VP Danny Bilson. "I already know what *Saints Row 4* is about and it is wilder than this one," he told G4. "It's a good example of how you take what you have and you say, 'What can happen in the next?'" Unlike *Assassin's Creed III*, announcing *Saints Row 4* was something of a shock because it's not been an annual series to this point and Bilson almost undermines the selling point of *Saints Row: The Third* by promising something wilder is on the way. Can't we just enjoy what we have first? No. No, you cannot. Tune in next month for the exclusive reveal of the *Saints Row 4 Special Collector's Limited Edition*! Maybe.

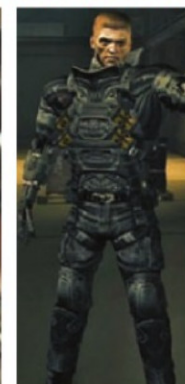
CHANGING FACES

How development time changes characters

Deus Ex: Human Revolution



Barrett (2009)



Barrett (now)



Duke Nukem Forever



Duke Nukem (2009)



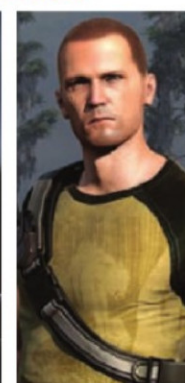
Duke Nukem (now)



inFamous 2



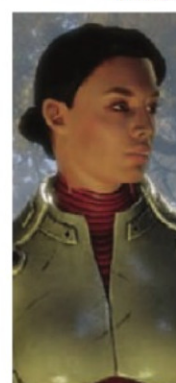
Cole MacGrath (2009)



Cole MacGrath (now)



Mass Effect



Ashley (2010)



Ashley (now)

INSTALL

Grand Theft Auto V

RUMOURS AND SPECULATION

GTA V WILL BOAST MULTIPLE PLAYABLE CHARACTERS

It's the rumour that won't die: *Grand Theft Auto V* will feature more than one playable character. Granted, there's no official word on the matter from Rockstar itself – it's not dumb enough to release the entire plot in one or even a million trailers – but we'd bet good money that this is the case.

'But **Play**,' you cry pathetically, 'Where is your evidence?' Well, the trailer very clearly shows three figures in detail: Oldy McOlderson, the guy waiting at the traffic lights in the convertible and the dude on the run from the cops towards the end.

So what? Well if you check out the section of the trailer where the gunmen jump out of the back of the van, you can see that each of the three present seem to resemble those featured elsewhere in the trailer.

It's not 100 per cent: their faces are covered, but it's enough to go on, especially when you consider the *GTA IV* 'trilogy': *The Lost And Damned* and *The Ballad Of Gay Tony* each told their own story, with their own lead characters, while weaving in and out of the events of Niko's narrative.

With that in mind, and also acknowledging that *Red Dead Redemption* and *L.A. Noire* toyed – to varying degrees of success – with multiple characters, we'd be surprised if Rockstar didn't implement a multiple character scenario. How this would affect mission rampages we couldn't say, but Rockstar appears to be steadily building up the confidence to shatter the preconceptions of a character arc in a *GTA* game.

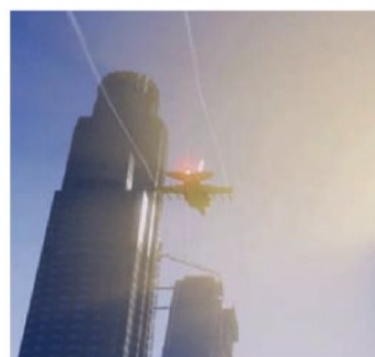


EMPIRE BUILDING WILL RETURN FROM GTA: VICE CITY STORIES, ENABLING PLAYERS TO USE THEIR MONEY CREATIVELY

One of *Vice City Stories*' finest achievements was being able to buy 'fronts' for your illegal businesses, and dictate how large or small you wanted the operation to be, with the appropriate risk and reward. With *GTA V* focusing on the recession, don't bet against using money as a weapon, buying property to launder cash and squeeze your foes.

MORE OUTRAGEOUS WANTED LEVEL RESPONSES: THE RETURN OF THE ARMY?

GTA IV replaced the army with NOOSE, a SWAT-team-alike that fit the more serious tone of the game but wasn't anywhere near as fun as gunning it from a tank. With fighter jets back on the agenda, expect a military response if your rampage goes too far.



BASE jumping will return

Fairly obvious one this: with the return of jets, surely parachutes will make it in. If that's the case then we can't see BASE jumping not making the cut, especially as everyone got their knickers in a twist regarding *Grand Theft Auto IV*'s apparent lack of fun.

Likewise, weapons will be more outrageous

The *GTA IV* episodes gradually built up the established armoury, adding everything from pipebombs to explosive shotguns. As outlandish as these may have been, they weren't a patch on the flamethrowers and chainsaws of old. Expect that sort of ordinance to return.

There will be horses

Okay, this sounds a little outrageous, but come on: who wouldn't want to ride a horse through a traffic-jammed Hollywood? *Exactly*. There's a dog in the trailer and after creating the brilliant *Red Dead* Rockstar certainly has the technology for it. You know it makes sense. Kind of.

You'll be able to run your own gang again

Or at least you better be able to. THQ's excellent *Saints Row: The Third* has a cool gang mechanic, inspired by *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*. We expect Rockstar to implement a similar system in *GTA V* as you vie for control of the city, claiming it bit by bit.

Each of the three characters will have different abilities, weapons, and contacts, similar to how *GTA IV*, *TLAD* and *TBOGT* intersect

We touched upon this earlier, but if the game does feature multiple characters don't bet against them having specific weapons and NPCs they can call on to help with the dirty work, similar to how Niko, Luis and Johnny all had different back up.



WHAT YOU WANT

ON TWITTER (@PlayMag_UK)

NIRVANAFANWICKS

I want *GTA V* to be fun, long, funny and us to be American and a nice cast list that u can actually like not Nico eww

OMAC_BROTHER

I want the fun back in *Grand Theft Auto V*, and less "drive here, shoot that, drive home" missions.

CHRIS1_9_80

I want the fun factor of *San Andreas* back for *GTA V* with plenty of secrets to be found :)

DANESAYER

Police bikes! Bicycles! Animals!

SEANHORGANI

More bitches n hos... and a linear graphics system (can see further in distance). Actually what I want to see from the new *GTA* is that its available for PS4.

DANIELCAKE

Guns. Lots of guns.



ON FACEBOOK (facebook.com/PlayMagazineUK)

KELLY BRADY

A return of the famous Jet Packs, and more character customisation options like the tattoos and stuff from *San Andreas*.

NEIL VINCENT

A spiffing review from Play oh chaps! :D

STEPHEN JAMES

I want *GTA San Andreas* with improved graphics but I won't get that lol. Hopefully they have all the great stuff from SA like buying houses and lots of customisation.

KEVIN WILLIAM SMITH

I want a game that hasn't got loads of content purposely kept out so that it can be released as bloody DLC on a later date to screw over fans.

TIM NORRIS

I expect we will see violence and boobies...

DEAN BOOSH-BOOSH WELSH

I want somethin that isn't a *San Andreas* HD Classic. I want a NEW GAME!

ADAM NARAIN

A 12+ rating so I can play it

MICHAEL BULMAN

A notch up on all the other games.

TONY WATSON SKELTON

I want all that *San Andreas* had to offer. Crazy cheats and EVERYTHING...

DANIEL GOUGH

Cheats, gimp suits, prostitutes, sex, nudity, CUSTOMISATION, and funny things unlike *GTA IV*. I mean the only thing I laughed at in *GTA IV* was the Pisswasser lager, and the heartstopper burger, that's it. It made me a little sad that *GTA* had kind of gone too serious.

Charts

Cataloguing everything that's big in the world of PlayStation

PS3 CHART

- Modern Warfare 3**
Activision
This game has sold more copies than its players have spent casings. Maybe. Either way it's very popular.
- Assassin's Creed Revelations**
Ubisoft
Proof if any were needed that some franchises will sell on the back of their popularity rather than quality.
- Saints Row: The Third**
THQ
This is the hit that THQ needed. Danny Bilson can breathe a big sigh of relief.
- Skyrim**
Bethesda
How is this not higher? We'd like to know. If you don't own this we hate you (unless you have a good excuse).
- FIFA 12**
EA
Still a class apart from other football games, even if it's no longer the top dog with the big releases around.
- WWE 12**
THQ
Who bought this? WHO WAS IT? We'll find you, and we will stunner you into submission.
- Battlefield 3**
EA
The single-player mode is really bad, but the multiplayer more than makes up for it.
- Batman: Arkham City**
Warner Bros.
One of the best games of the year, and also the ultimate *Batman* simulator. Makes dreams come true.
- Uncharted 3**
Sony
Thankfully now patched, *Uncharted 3* now, er, works. Which is good, eh? Let's patch all games! EVERY ONE!
- Sonic Generations**
Sega
Oh look, it's Sonic! He's back! And he's actually in a pretty good game! Shock horror!

PSP CHART

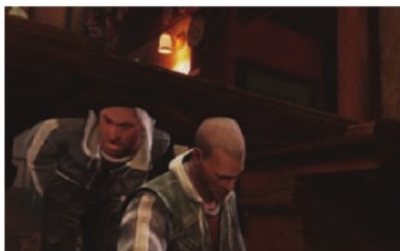
- FIFA 12**
EA
Is this as good as *PES 6*? No, it is not. But it's still pretty good. Make up your own minds, sheesh.
- Persona 2: Innocent Sin**
Ghostlight
Ian loves this dose of craziness, and it appears you guys do, too. Congratulations.
- Lego Pirates Of The Caribbean**
Disney
Oh look it's *Lego Pirates Of The Caribbean* again. Who's still buying it? Surely everyone owns this by now?
- Football Manager 2012**
Sega
Another year, another version of *Football Manager*. Thanks very much, Sports Interactive.
- Lego Harry Potter Years 5-7**
Warner Bros.
Oh look it's another Lego... wait, this one's *Lego Potter*. It's going to sell like hot *Harry Potter* merchandise.

*This chart is compiled from sales, our opinions and the games you're playing. If you're playing a recent, quality title that isn't on our chart, head on over to the forum and let us know about it.

PUB BRAWLS, BY UNCHARTED 3



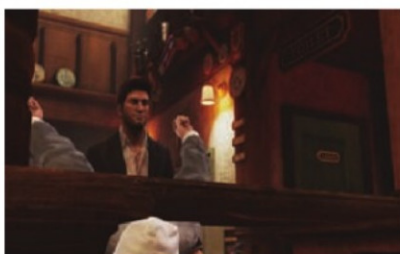
PART 1 Grasp hinged bar top.



PART 2 Swing downward with force.



PART 3 Watch angrily as man's head gets stuck in bar.



PART 4 Think of England.

JUST RELEASED



WWE '12

Released a few weeks before we hit shelves, we've had to go back this far thanks to the lack of interesting releases in December. It's another wrestling game, and it's another year of promises that haven't been lived up to. There is some fun to be had in multiplayer – get a group of mates together and you can genuinely have a good time. But that's not good enough – too many caveats and 'cans'. It has to be an enjoyable experience in every mode, almost all the time, or we're not going to recommend it. We don't recommend WWE '12.



THE BIG RELEASE

27 January

ANARCHY REIGNS

By merit of being the only full-price game we know of being released in January, *Anarchy Reigns* achieves the spot of 'the big release'. It's fortunate, then, that it looks like a bit of a hoot. Made by **Play** favourite Platinum Games and starring characters from some of the company's old titles, along with a fair few more invented just for this, players take part in a tournament of, well, fighting. It looks like it could fill a distinct *Power Stone/Virtual On*-shaped hole in our lives and we are more than welcoming to anything coming from this particular developer. So there you go.

RELEASELIST January's looking like a good month to play all those Christmas games!

JANUARY

Anarchy Reigns
NFL Blitz

FEBRUARY

PlayStation Vita
SoulCalibur V
Final Fantasy XIII-2
UFC Undisputed 3
The Darkness II
Inversion
Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning
Binary Domain
SSX
Twisted Metal
Asura's Wrath
Syndicate
Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom 3 Vita
Uncharted: Golden Abyss
Ridge Racer Vita
Shinobido 2: Tales Of The Ninja
Touch My Katamari
F1 2011 Vita
Captain Morgane And The Golden Turtle
Combat Wings: The Great Battles Of World War II

MARCH

Max Payne 3
Aliens: Colonial Marines
Ghost Recon: Future Soldier
Mass Effect 3
Lollipop Chainsaw
Ridge Racer Unbounded
Dragon's Dogma
Street Fighter X Tekken
Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City
Sniper: Ghost Warrior 2
The Testament Of Sherlock Holmes

2012

London 2012: The Official Video Game Of The Olympic Games
Assassin's Creed III
Borderlands 2
Metro: Last Light
Hitman Absolution
Blades Of Time
Devil's Third
Dragon's Crown
Darksiders II
Dishonored

Prey 2
Ninja Gaiden 3
Prototype 2
XCOM
DmC
BioShock Infinite
Far Cry 3
Tekken Tag Tournament 2
Armored Core 5
Counter Strike: Global Offensive
Metal Gear Solid: Rising
Asura's Wrath
Never Dead
Brothers In Arms: Furious 4
Port Royale 3
Resistance: Burning Skies
Everybody's Golf Vita
Sound Shapes
WipEout 2048
Little Deviants
Hustle Kings Vita
ModNation Racers Vita
Reality Fighters
Super Stardust Delta
LittleBigPlanet Vita

FORWARD PLANNER JANUARY 2012

"Your dragon is adequately made, I'd say it's impressive" - Andy Salter

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
01 NEW YEAR'S DAY Official recovery day for the biggest party in the world. Unless you don't bother with that nonsense, in which case you can just sit around in your pants playing games all day.	03 NFL BLITZ We're not hugely positive about this one. But we'll still be paying close attention to the returning <i>Blitz</i> on release.	05	06 DC UNIVERSE ONLINE No, it's not a new release, but it's free to play so there's no excuse not to pick up a cheap copy and jump on it.	08	09 TROLL HUNTER This is a dark, dry Norwegian satire/horror film made on a very small budget. Not perfect, but well worth watching.	11
12	15	16	17-18 CLOUD GAMING EUROPE The future of gaming, or a technology Sony will never really grasp? We'd go with the former. Listen to knowledgeable people talk knowledgeable things at this cloud gaming convention.	19 PLAY 214 New year blues getting you down? Let the warm, loving embrace of the next issue of <i>Play</i> take all your worries away.	20	21
22 ARSENAL VS MAN UTD Two of the biggest forces in the Premier League clash in what will surely be a great match.	23	24	25	26	27 ANARCHY REIGNS This is a tentative date right now, as it seems not even Sega knows when it's out, but this bottle of Sega-based brawling should be out at some point in January.	
29	30	31				

PSN HEAT BAR!

JANUARY

Not just the weather, but the general lack of releases. It's understandable, and we do still have all of the 10 billion games released in November to plough through, so it's not all bad.

NFL BLITZ

One of the few releases in January, we're glad to see *Blitz* back. But judging by the recent letdown that was *NBA Jam*, we're cautious as to how this one will turn out.

SKYRIM DLC

This would be roasting hot, but we're still waiting to find out what this is going to be so we're tempering our excitement. It's promised to be bigger and better than *Oblivion's* DLC, though.

FEBRUARY

It seems publishers are loving the February window, and next month is going to be another bumper one for games (and that's before we even get to March).

TIME TO MOVE ON?

The end is nigh for Sony's Wii-inspired motion controller



DID IT EVER sound like a good idea? When Sony announced Move, it did so by getting two nervous-looking blokes to come out on stage at E3 2009 and wave the thing about like frightened rabbits caught in the world's flashlights. For comparison's sake, Microsoft debuted Kinect the day before with Steven Spielberg.

Not that Kinect turned out to be much better mind, but you get the gist: Sony's motion controller seemed like nothing more than a shameless cash-grab for some of the vital Wii market that had everyone running scared. As it turns out, that may not be all that far from the truth.

Now there's nothing actually wrong with Move, above and beyond the me-too nature of its conception. It works. It's accurate. It's better than the Wiimote, that's for sure. It's just that the games aren't there. And nothing in this industry, from consoles down to controllers, can survive without the games.

Some of the games that *are* there are good of course: *The House Of The Dead: Overkill: Extended Cut* being one, *Killzone 3* being another. But for the most part Move functionality is either the preserve of party/dancing games, or shoe-horned into certain titles for no other reason than to shout about it on the box (*SOCOM*, we're looking at you).

There's just no killer app, and there doesn't look like there will be one at any point in the future either. Just look at Nintendo: after rinsing the casual market for all it's worth with the Wii, it's seen the decline of motion control as a popular fad and has already announced that the WiiU will have a completely different gimmick altogether. If those guys are doing it – essentially turning their backs on the very thing that made the company so outrageously successful and propelled it back to the top of the heap – then what hope is there for an optional controller that hasn't sold in amazing numbers, something that even the dreadful Kinect sensor can even boast?

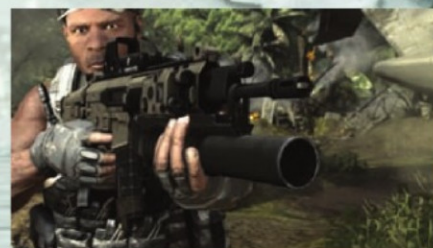
Not much. Unless Sony can pull out something truly special for the peripheral (because, let's be honest, no one else is going to do it) then maybe it's time to admit that the controller did some of the job it was meant to do – lure grannies and casuals and other non-core groups into the PS3 fray – and send it off into that great peripheral graveyard in the sky, where it can be happy and hang out with the G-Con 45. That's a nice thought, isn't it?



“ This gun-thing is pretty cool. Largely useless of course, but nice if you want to look like you're from a Nineties Nintendo advert ”

KILLZONE 3

In fairness, *Killzone 3* did implement Move controls very well. It's just not enough, however



“ Oh, *SOCOM*: why have you gone so mental recently? ”

BIG SONY SEQUELS INBOUND?



GOD OF WAR IV

There is no better source of gaming-related rumours than retailers in New Zealand, as the saying we've just made up goes, so when a retailer in New Zealand says *God Of War IV* is due in September 2012, we have to listen. Santa Monica Studio is currently working on *Starhawk*, which is due in February next year. We don't doubt that *God Of War IV* will happen but we don't think it'll be as soon as September 2012 – Santa Monica Studio has traditionally bridged projects with portable games.

CHANCES: ■■■■■■



KILLZONE 4

Guerrilla Games will have had its head down for a while now, as a few job openings on its site have given away that the studio is already hard at work on its next project following *Killzone 3*. Herman Hulst at Guerrilla has already said the studio wants to work on a new IP but it's still hard to see it walking away from *Killzone*, which has been the company's sole concern for the past seven years. *Killzone 4* is too predictable, if anything, and more likely to kick off a new system launch. We'll have to wait and see.

CHANCES: ■■■■■■



RESISTANCE 4

While Insomniac Games was undoubtedly proud of its FPS series, *Resistance* never quite caught the break it needed. The first two games disappointed, burning through the goodwill that could have saved the excellent *Resistance 3* from a stiff retail performance. With the story mostly wrapped up and morbid sales, it's unlikely we'll see another entry for this series any time soon. Instead, bet on new hardware giving *Resistance* the jump in technology and gameplay possibilities to bring the masses back on board.

CHANCES: ■■■■■■



HEAVY RAIN 2

David Cage has already said that *Heavy Rain 2* won't happen, as it will be 'milking the franchise'. Instead, developer Quantic Dreams is supposedly working on *Infraworld*, an on/off project for the studio, which was hinted at with a poster in *Heavy Rain*. Either way, David Cage has strongly implied he's not about to abandon the storytelling style that defined both *Heavy Rain* and previous game *Fahrenheit*, so look for its new project to follow similar lines.

CHANCES: ■■■■■■

FAST & FURIOUS VS NEED FOR SPEED

We clocked *Need For Speed: The Run* in just over two hours. Two hours! How does that compare to the *Fast And The Furious* films?



Need For Speed: The Run (2011)

134 minutes



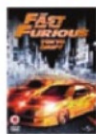
Fast & Furious 5 (2011)

130 minutes



Fast & Furious (2009)

107 minutes



The Fast And The Furious: Tokyo Drift (2006)

105 minutes



2 Fast 2 Furious (2003)

108 minutes



The Fast And The Furious (2001)

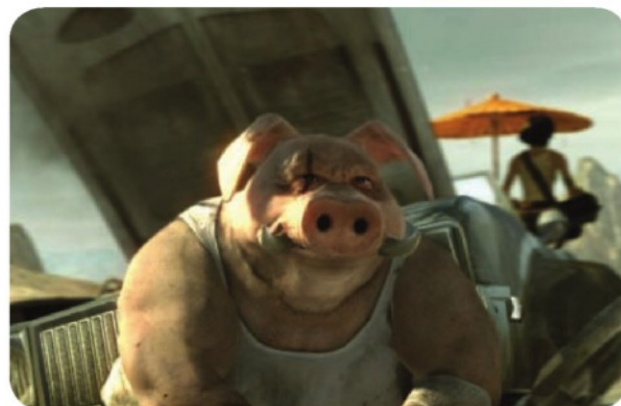
107 minutes

5 BEST ANIMAL SIDEKICKS

Animals tend to be better than people – they don't answer back, they're easy to keep subservient and they're sometimes cute. But what's better than an animal is an animal sidekick – because they're there to help

1 CHOCOBO – FINAL FANTASY SERIES

If it wasn't for the Chocobo, we would never have seen the most pointlessly long summon animation of all time in *Knights Of The Round*. If it wasn't for the Chocobo, we wouldn't have *that* music stuck in our heads. If it wasn't for the Chocobo, life wouldn't be as much fun.



2 UNCLE PEY'J – BEYOND GOOD & EVIL

We feel a bit guilty for calling him an animal, as he's more a fat, loving mechanic to us. Always watching Jade's back, always there to help (apart from when *he* needs helping)... but, well – he's still just a pig. And we're not being mean, he's literally a pig.



3 AGRO – SHADOW OF THE COLOSSUS

Is it weird to form such a strong bond with a videogame horse, to the point that you lurch from your chair and exclaim when you think something bad has happened to it? Because if that's weird, we don't want to not be weird. Agro is a true hero throughout *SOTC*.

TEAM PICKS

The team's top animal sidekicks



STEVE

JAKE 'THE SNAKE' ROBERTS, WWE ALL STARS

Technically not an animal, but then neither is a robot dog. At least Jake had an actual snake. Well, at least until Earthquake sat on it. Still, Jake wore snakeskin boots.



ANDY

BARBAS, SKYRIM

"He's a dog in *Skyrim*. Because he's a quest item, he can't be killed. So he's a tanking dog!" Andy doesn't own any pets in real life. Thankfully.



IAN

MR TOOTS, RED FACTION ARMAGEDDON

One saving grace of this bag of mediocrity was the unicorn that shat lasers from its bum. I'd say, 'I wish I was making this up,' but I don't, and I'm glad I'm not.



RYAN

DAXTER, JAK & DAXTER

He's an otter! He's a weasel! He's a cross between the two! Which makes him an 'ottsel' and not an 'otterweasel' as we thought. Whatever. Screw you science!

twitterwatch



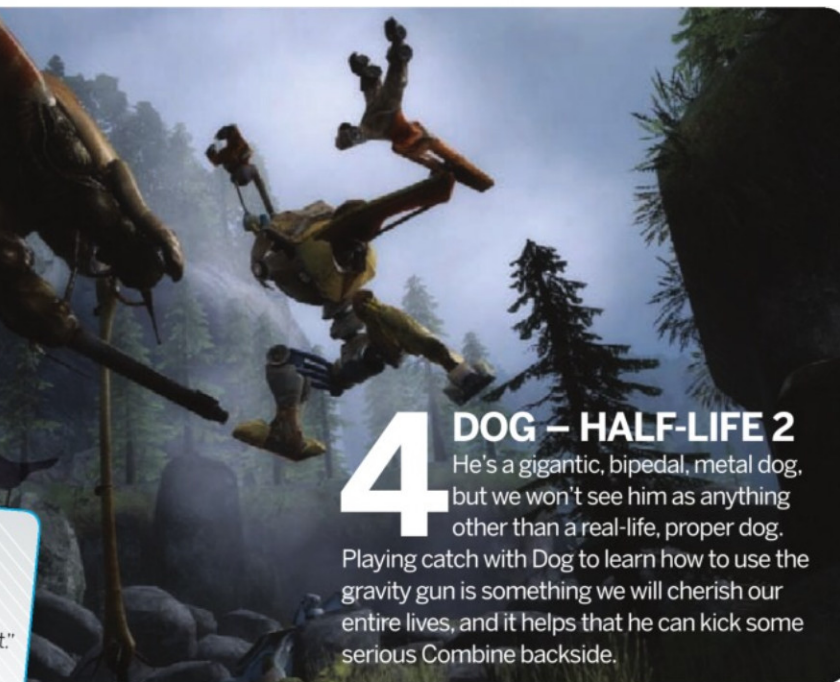
@rich_lem

"Playing the absolutely magnificent, incredibly fun *PixelJunk SideScroller*, and drinking tiny, tiny glasses of port."

@PlayMag_UK says: The lead designer for *Uncharted 3* certainly knows how to have a good time! Not like us, given we've just played *Lord Of The Rings: War In The North* while slumped on our sofa and drinking big glasses of whiskey. We're just depressed.

5 WAGGLETON P TALLYLICKEE – BULLETSTORM

Technically he's known as the Mechaton, technically he's not even a he and *technically* he isn't an animal, as he's a massive robot (the second in this list). But Waggleton P Tallylicker, for the services rendered to Grayson Hunt, will forever be in our hearts. "He served us well... He will be remembered."



4 DOG – HALF-LIFE 2

He's a gigantic, bipedal, metal dog, but we won't see him as anything other than a real-life, proper dog. Playing catch with Dog to learn how to use the gravity gun is something we will cherish our entire lives, and it helps that he can kick some serious Combine backside.



The anatomy of... BIOSHOCK INFINITE'S ELIZABETH

BioShock Infinite looks to be the most exciting game of the early part of next year, and a large part of the reason is its fantastic setting and interesting characters. One of the major players is young Elizabeth here

PRECIOUS AND GRACE

Elizabeth might be 20, but she's spent 15 years of her life captured aboard the floating city of Columbia. The city's population – housed on the early 20th Century American creation that's gone rogue and is actually a giant battleship – has split into two dominant factions: the Founders and the Vox Populi ('Voice of the People'). A prisoner in Columbia since she was just five years old, Elizabeth is the reason that player character Booker DeWitt is on board the city, tasked with bringing her back to New York.

TEARS IN THE RAIN

Although Elizabeth may be young (and in some instances, display rather childlike tendencies) she's hardly defenceless. In fact, she's able to rip through the space-time continuum and travel to different time periods or bring living things or objects back through, which we have to admit is quite a party trick. She's not able to control it, however: overuse damages her physically, as evidenced in the trailer when her nose starts bleeding after she uses her powers.

VIGOUROUS DRINKING

Infinite's answer to BioShock's ability-giving tonics are now called Vigours, and are drunk rather than injected. These abilities include killing people with a mass of crows, charming your enemies to fight for you and using telekinesis to pick up weapons and fire them at your enemies remotely. Elizabeth can be used to augment these Vigours, but as before this comes at a cost: use Elizabeth's new powers too much and she'll start to lose health.

SING WHEN YOU'RE KILLING

The flip side to having Booker covering her back, Elizabeth is 'protected' by a gigantic metallic bird of prey named Songbird. As well as looking like it should be animated in stop-motion and shoot lasers out of its eyes, it was Elizabeth's guardian (read: captor) when she was growing up, and will attack Booker at will. Because of her love for the Songbird, however, attacking it will result in a worsening relationship between Booker and his charge.

FRIENDS AND WELL-WISHERS

Elizabeth may be the main focus of Booker's mission, but she's not the only person of interest to the disgraced detective: the following rogue's gallery all have something to hide, as well as something to offer



ZACHARY HALE COMSTOCK

OCCUPATION: LEADER OF THE FOUNDERS
Look at this guy: how can he not be evil? Exactly. That said, Comstock reckons that he can control Elizabeth's supernatural powers, and she and Booker make the trip to his headquarters to find out if this is the case. Which it probably isn't, to be fair.



SALTONSTALL

OCCUPATION: POLITICIAN/MADMAN
Appearing initially as a harmless old codger bent on getting elected into office (mainly by giving an impassioned speech to an empty row of chairs), Saltonstall soon shows his true colours, transforming into what looks like a Soviet secret agent when attacked. Could the Russians be after Elizabeth? Probably – everyone else is.



DAISY FITZROY

OCCUPATION: LEADER OF THE VOX POPULI
Zachary Hale Comstock's opposite number and a fan of terrorism, propaganda and intimidating posters, Fitzroy is also aware of Elizabeth's powers. Naturally, she wants them, but we're not sure that a woman who only appears in blood red should be able to harness the power of the space-time continuum. Just saying.



HANDYMEN

OCCUPATION: SECURITY ROBOTS
These guys may have the exterior of your average tinman, but all of that armour hides a human brain and heart. Which doesn't matter much when they're chasing Elizabeth down, we admit.

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Podcast

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Go to www.Play-Mag.co.uk for daily updates and features



SKYRIM? GET BLOOD OMEN INSTEAD

Finally: *Blood Omen: Legacy Of Kain* is available on EU PSN. After being available on the US store for ages – and as such requiring laborious methods to acquire it – the vampire toff's first adventure is available for us all to download without any hassle.

'But Play,' you quiver. 'It looks... rubbish.' Normally, we'd kill any fool brave enough to say such things, but it kind of does, although it retains that glorious, PSone charm. The art style is still good, as well, but more than that *Blood Omen* is a great, *Zelda*-style action-adventure, following the titular character's journey from slain nobleman to undead overlord. Accessible with interesting RPG trappings, this is a) massively atmospheric and b) the best vampire simulator outside of well, *Skyrim*. But don't take our word for it. Download it, love it, demand a sequel. You know it makes sense.



HOW LONG SHOULD GAMES BE?

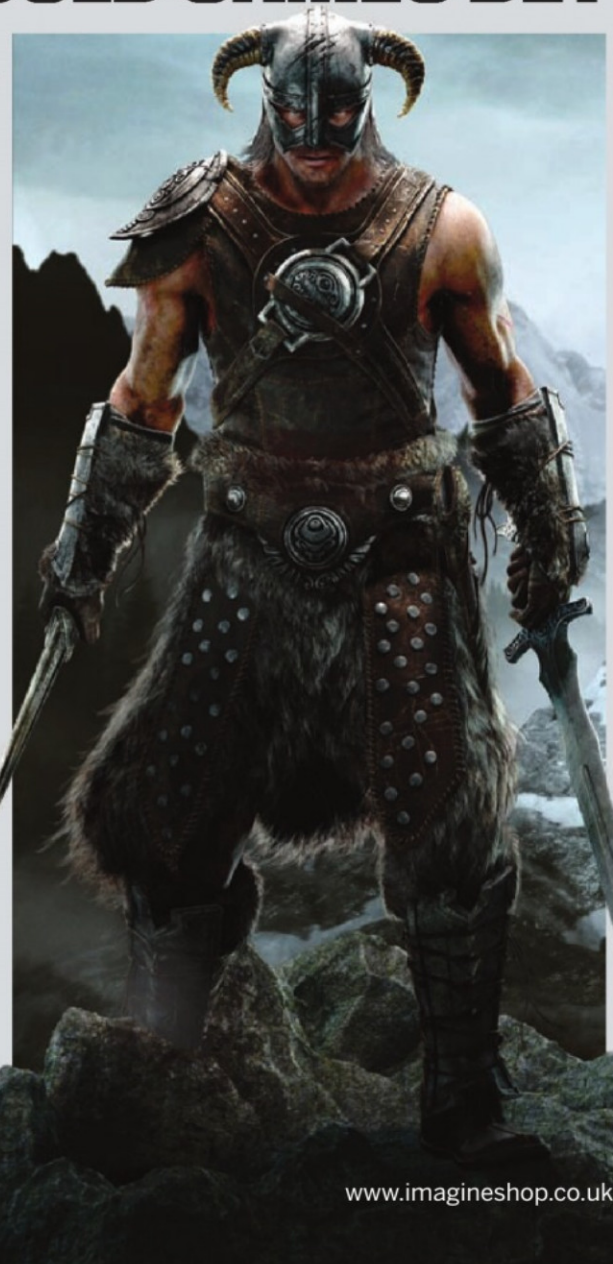
This question has been asked before, but *Skyrim*'s release the other week – was it really 11 days ago? – has had people thinking again: how long do you expect games to be these days? From a personal perspective I've pumped around 55 hours into *Skyrim* – all my own time, nothing work-related – and I've barely scratched the surface of the main campaign missions. In fact, I've only completed one single questline. That's incredible value when you look at the cost:time-put-in ratio.

But is that the only marker of value? Something like *Uncharted 3* took me seven hours or so, but I wouldn't feel jipped by putting my £30-40 (not RRP, naturally) behind that, even ignoring the multiplayer aspect. Which I probably would. But just a couple of years ago, when it was revealed that *Modern Warfare 2*'s campaign clocked in at about five or six hours, people were irate. It wasn't good enough.

These days games do seem to be shorter in general and there is still outcry every now and then (especially with something like *Need For Speed: The 'Two Hour' Run*), but it's become more accepted that games clock in at under ten hours, under eight hours or under six hours.

How long is long enough? I don't know. I don't want every game to last 55 hours without me actually having done 90 per cent of the game. I want that to be a treat – something once every five years. At the same time, I don't want every £30-40 (not RRP, of course) I drop on a game to bring me a five or six hour campaign – regardless of how bombastic and Hollywoodish it is. I don't know what I want, truth be told. Do you?

<http://bit.ly/tuipck>



facebook

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Things you may have missed on our Facebook page



LOUD NOISES

Did you know the *Battlefield 3* soundtrack was composed with nothing more than a burning cello and a helicopter? It's true! We've been sent visual proof! This soundtrack is PURE FIRE!



PAY YOUR DUES

Ahhh yes, the soundtrack for '*Dues Ex: Human Revolution*', the open play-how-you-want FPS where every mission ends with Adam Jensen growling "I just paid my dues" while sliding his sunglasses on.

PLAY DISCUSSION:

PLAY: Gaming wise, what are you hoping to see in 2012?

GABBY WILLIAMS: Remake of *Crash Bandicoot* – never going to happen but would be amazing.

MICHAEL JORDAN: PSVita all the way.

ADRIAN MULES: More games with Snoopy in them.

SCOTT BOWIE: Less lazy sequels like *Need For Speed: The Run* and *WWE '12*.

RYAN COLLINS: A game with a story and setting akin to *Fallout*, with *Skyrim*'s engine and vehicles for transport.

DAVID GOODWIN: Definitely the PSVita, roll on March.

PAUL DURIE: I'm hoping for a sequel to a massive space opera RPG. Hope it gets announced!

NEIL VINCENT: I've been meaning to ask you guys this for ages but always forgot... so what game, according to *Play*'s reviews (because they CANNOT be wrong) is the worst game in your

PS3 games collection?? I think mine is *Blacksite*, rated 43%.

JAMES WARD: Mine is *Haze* I think.

THOMAS DAVIS: *SOCOM: Confrontation* at 55%. However, I must protest that *Play* re-review *Assassin's Creed* as if *Uncharted* wasn't coming out alongside it, as that was an exceptional game when it first came out, and they gave it 58%! I think that at that time, they were reviewing it IN COMPARISON to *Uncharted*, and 58% for a game like that means an unbiased re-review.

TONY BARTON: Worst PS3 game ever is *G1 Jockey 4 2008*, absolutely shit!

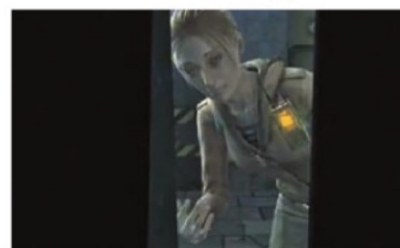
CONOR GARRATT: I too have *SOCOM: Confrontation*. While *Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood* got a good score in *Play*, I must protest it is awful. And *Need For Speed: ProStreet* is about as good as a turgid swamp.

LEE HEATHER: The worst game I've owned is *Duke Nukem* which got 32%, quite a generous score considering it's the worst game I've ever played.

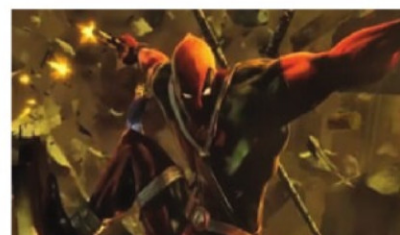
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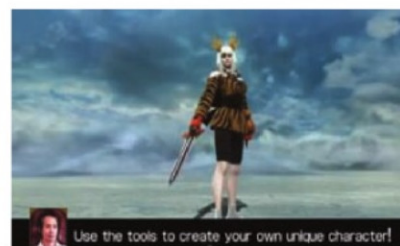
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UMVC3 - CG LAUNCH TRAILER



ASSASSIN'S CREED REVELATIONS STORY RECAP



SOULCALIBUR V CHARACTER CREATION



GTA V ANNOUNCEMENT TRAILER



EZIO IN SOULCALIBUR V

twitter

www.twitter.com/PlayMag_UK

What have you been saying to us on Twitter?

@PLAYMAG_UK Do you want PlayStation 4? How many years do you think PlayStation 3 has 'left'?

@COPPER78 Yes want PS4 but think PS3 has at least one more solid year left. Depends on MS & Xbox, if they jump Sony should follow quickly.

@SLEEPYAKIRA Wow, I personally think the PS3 is miles ahead of the current competition. PS4 will have some sort of augmented reality jimjam.

@THEZJMAN I don't think they'll do anything until they see how WiiU does next year.

@PHOENIXR87 Plenty for me because I won't be able to afford a PS4 until three years after release. I love my PS3!

@HANKBIZZLE I'm torn, I do want PS4 but PS3 has some life left yet. Plus I couldn't afford a PS4 just now anyway!!

@ISABREMAN PS3 has lots of time left, only first party really use the machine's power. Multiformat titles are usually lazily ported to PS3.

@THERJMCFERRAN I think the PS3 has a few years left yet. I don't see what the PS4 will be able to do differently but I'd still welcome it.

@PLAYMAG_UK To everyone pondering about what Game of the Year might be – let's calm that talk right now. Don't forget *Puss In Boots*!

@CONORRRRRRRRR Possibly the best (only??) Move game of 2011?

@ALKOGNIUZZ Antonio Banderas FTW!

@KITTLE11 *Champion Jockey* won it for me. Never have I felt as alive as when I'm wearing a gimp suit, whipping my ass and shouting 'DRIVE!'

@AGITO9327 Can't wait for *Puss In Boots*

@PLAYMAG_UK This morning's discussion on *Play*: does Danny Dyer like *Skyrim*?

@JJR0305 *Skyrim* doesn't like Danny Dyer...

@WICKOGUY If Danny Dyer don't like *Skyrim* then I don't like Danny Dyer... YEAH I WENT THERE!

RE:PLAY

Listen, it's really very simple: you write words, you get games. Has anything ever been that simple? Maybe writing *these* words

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GTA is back, Play is amazing, world keeps spinning

Dear Play,

I just had to write to you after seeing the newly released *GTA V* trailer!

It looks amazing and I'm glad it's back in San Andreas (the best *GTA* location ever!).

I've been following *GTA* ever since its inception back in 1997 when I was just seven years old (no, I'm not a raving, psychotic serial killer, influenced by violent videogames) and I'm so hyped for this next instalment.

So what did you think of the trailer? I'll be keeping my eyes peeled in future issues of your amazing mag for any more *GTA V* info.

PS Did I say your magazine is amazing? Well it is, so there!

Gary Coombs, via email

First of all, you're right about Play magazine being amazing. Second, you're also correct regarding the fact that playing videogames with violent content doesn't turn you into a Hannibal Lecter-style raving sociopath, like all of those shrieking headlines suggested you might. Funny that. Anyway, it's safe to say that the entire Play office is looking forward to *GTA V* with an anticipation bordering on frenzy. Rockstar knows how to put a great trailer together, and the excitement generated by *Grand Theft Auto V*'s reveal has us hoping that it will launch around May next year. It won't.

Any question answered (badly)

Dear Play,

I've got a lot of questions for you today, and hopefully you can answer at least a couple of them, but beforehand, I just wanted to say how much I love your magazine. I started subscribing last year, and I plan to do so again! Your magazine is really quite amazing, and I can't get enough of it :)

I can't wait for the Vita, but I can't help but wonder about if I should buy it or not. Don't get more wrong, I'm almost definitely going to, but I have a lot of questions unanswered and I end up doubting this machine, which is silly because I shouldn't. The problem is, Sony Computer Entertainment, in my opinion, left the UK in the dark for Vita. The US knows which network the Vita will run on. So does Japan. UK? I hope they tell us soon.

But onto my questions! Answer as many as you can, if you can even answer one, I PROMISE to buy *Play* for the next two years! That's a good deal, right?

- 1a. Can I import the Vita from the US to the UK?
- 1b. Will I be able to log in to my UK account, and use the UK PSN (with US Vita)?
- 1c. Could I import the 3G model, and connect to the unknown UK service?
2. Do you know what network service the UK Vita will use? (if not, your opinion and why?)
3. Will the Vita games be cheaper to download?
- 4a. How much will Sony memory cards be?



- 4b. How much will third-party memory cards be?
5. How much will it cost to import a 3G model from US to UK (if 3G wouldn't work, Wi-Fi model), buy an adaptor, a large memory card and put £100 on my PSN account?

Can't wait to read your next issue (I love *Mass Effect 3* so I'm so excited). Continue to spread your Words of Wisdom!

Paul Gurney, Bromley, via email

Right then, where to begin? We admire your dedication to getting a Vita as early as possible, but sadly we don't happen to know the answer to all of these questions. That said, we've given it our best shot, so here we go...

1a. Yes. Although customs might try to nick it/stitch you up. They can be funny like that.

1b. Probably. Possibly. Maybe...



The stuff we want to hear about!

1

MW3: Did it live up to your expectations?

2

Skyrim: better than Oblivion?

3

Vita: are you still going to get one?





Write in, and win! Every full-length letter we print receives a free game, courtesy of Ubisoft. For each letter we included this month, the sender wins a copy of R.U.S.E., which is available from Ubisoft for the PS3 (£49.99).

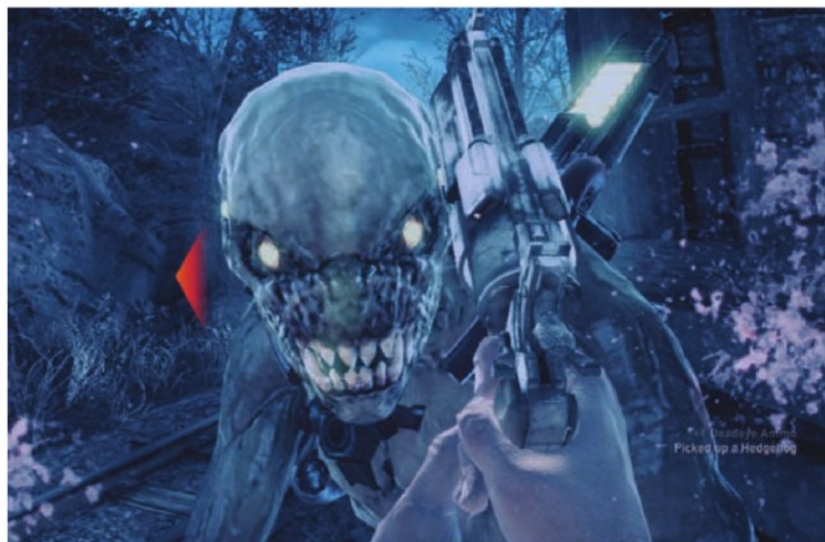
Arghhhh, we just don't know.
1c. Possibly, although you're now dangerously close to the 'more hassle than it's worth' end of the spectrum.
2. No, although our money's on the lan-ism network, run by our very own Dransfield. If a call drops, he guarantees to come over and finish the conversation with you in person.
3. Ye-es, but by how much we don't know. Having said that, with the current PSN pricing model download games will probably be priced at around £30m.
4a. Too much. Also: memory cards? What year is this?
4b. Cheaper. Also: third-party memory cards? What year is this?
5. Too much, both in terms of cash and hassle.

'You're using a 486, don't make me laugh'

Dear Play,
I have been an avid reader of your excellent publication since the beginning. I started gaming on an old 486 and still remember with glee the day I managed to connect two PCs together with BNC connectors to Ethernet cards to destroy my mate at *Doom*. Aw, happy days.

Well, enough reminiscing and on to the point. I guess you have worked out I am an ageing gamer from way back when computers had valves and so on to my reason for writing. I have just read your review of *Rage* and to be honest I am in a bit of a rage myself. Arghhhh, see there I go.

While I fully agree with a lot of your comments – yes, it's not well drawn, yes, it goes on a bit at times etc etc etc. But think of this, some of us older-gen



gamers will love it, it brings *Doom* back to our ailing limbs and hearts. I love it to bits, I have waited five years in a dark room feeding off tidbits of *COD*, *Assassin's Creed* and *FIFA* and now I have light, yeaaaaa might even have to remind the missus why we got married, but only when I have finished *Rage*, lol.

Anyways, keep up the excellent work and you have a fan for life here guys.
(Grumpy old git) Chris, via email

Glad that you like Rage, Chris. We didn't hate it, just didn't think that it lived up to expectations. As for your comments on Doom: thanks for the nostalgia trip. The man Burns remembers attempting to get it running on a 286 (the fool) and Ian's desktop image to this day is the cover of the game. In fact, inspired by your recollections we fired up YouTube footage of the SNES port (Burns only having this version, of course, after his failed attempt to get it running on PC) and were nearly sick all over ourselves.

Wait to go

Dear Play,
When I picked up *Resistance 3* I didn't think my first mission would be to spend over an hour waiting for 650MB worth of updates to finish downloading. Those aliens really are evil! Isn't that sort of thing against the Geneva Convention?!

The reason I moved from PC to console gaming was to get away from having to download patches and updates in order to get a game running properly. It feels like a step backwards for the industry and should be the exception, not the norm. We gamers deserve better than a release schedule filled with broken games we have to hope they get around to fixing.

Gordon Mclean, via email

As ever, Gordon, you are absolutely correct. Downloading patches, updates and fixes is a pain in the ass no matter what machine you're doing it on, and we're sad to say that the PlayStation 3 is awful for it. Our personal pet hate is the PS3's maddening fixation with downloading code, and then installing it. What medieval mind sorcery made Sony decide to come up with a progress bar you wait to fill, immediately followed by yet another progress bar? Time will tell whether developers stop using us as unpaid beta testers, but the answer seems to be 'no. Now buy our DLC!' Which makes us sad. And angry. But mostly sad.



Though far from perfect, *Rage* does bring back fond memories of *Doom*.



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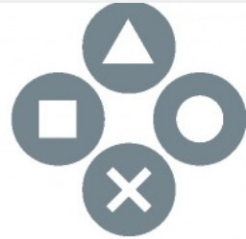


21,735
Jan-Dec 2010

12 IN 2012

FINAL FANTASY XIII-2
BIOSHOCK INFINITE
HITMAN: ABSOLUTION
THE DARKNESS II
MAX PAYNE 3
ASSASSIN'S CREED III
TOMB RAIDER
THE LAST GUARDIAN
STARHAWK
DEAD SPACE 3
RESIDENT EVIL 6
GRAND THEFT AUTO V

Now that the feast of videogaming goodness that was 2011 is coming to an end it's time for us to look ahead to the treats lined up for the coming year. From the return of Agent 47 and Max Payne to the latest addition to Rockstar's mega franchise and yet another Assassin's Creed game, there's enough here to keep everyone happy



“There’s now more variation and choice in where you can explore (you’re not just running down a very pretty tube any more) and while the worlds you’ll traipse around in won’t be all new – areas from Final Fantasy XIII will return, albeit in differing forms – there should be more than enough new content here to satisfy players.”

FINAL FANTASY XIII-2

ALSO KNOWN AS ‘THE APOLOGY’

PUBLISHER

Square Enix

DEVELOPER

Production Development
Division 1

RELEASE DATE

February 2012

FINAL FANTASY XIII, EH? Not as great as it was made out to be, but a good experience regardless. Still, with Squenix maybe sensing that the great next-generation hope that was going to be *XIII* didn’t really materialise, we’re now a stone’s throw away from semi-sequel *Final Fantasy XIII-2* (indeed, it’s already out in Japan).

SO WHAT’S ON OFFER? Well there’s now more variation and choice in where you can explore (you’re not just running down a very pretty tube any more) and while the worlds you’ll traipse around in won’t be all new – areas from *XIII* will return, albeit in differing forms – there should be more than enough new content here to satisfy players who saw every inch of Lightning’s quest. Speaking of Lightning, *FFXIII-2* sees her having mysteriously gone missing, with sister Serah Farron now being one of two playable characters, along with Noel Kreiss, with the two travelling through space and time to rescue her. This system, known as ‘Historia Crux’, promises to keep play non-linear (one of the main causes of complaint of the last game) and also introduce intriguing paradoxes: if you’re a hundred years in the past, surely you should be able to affect the future? *FFXIII* might have been a letdown, but this looks like the perfect antidote.



BIOSHOCK INFINITE

PRETTY FLY FOR A RIGHT (WING) GUY

PUBLISHER

2K Games

DEVELOPER

Irrational Games

RELEASE DATE

TBC 2012

With the absolute mammoth deluge of games in the lead-up to Christmas now finished, all eyes turn to the biggest releases of next year. Right at the top of the list is *BioShock Infinite*, Ken Levine and cos latest entry into the critically lauded franchise.

Skipping *BioShock 2* to create this, the team at Irrational looks to have used its energies wisely, again fusing highfalutin' social commentary with exciting gunplay.

Shifting locales from the bottom of the sea to the clouds high above the States, *Infinite* is probably going to be one of the contenders for game of the year: an incredibly well-realised world featuring interesting combat mechanics and with an actual story above and beyond 'shoot, now!'

"If it's a case of [thinking] 'I'm going to do what those Infinity Ward guys did and I'm going to do it better', well good fucking luck with that," Levine tells us. Instead, *Infinite* is more focused on relationships between the characters as well as gunplay.

"I like the movement like in *Jaws*, where Robert Shaw is

telling the story of the sinking of the Indianapolis, people going into the water and getting eaten by sharks. Then they're getting drunk and goofing around and Quint is the first to notice something's wrong – that the shark's coming. But that setup, the building of a relationship prior to it... that slow introduction to the danger is so powerful."

Which is all well and good: after all, there's only so many military shooters that you can play. But the developer hasn't forgotten that *Infinite* is still focused on shooting, mixing straight-up gats like shotguns with supernatural powers like calling in murderous crows to peck your enemies to death. One shooter staple that *Infinite* won't have, however, is a typical multiplayer mode.

"I think the mistake people often make is that they say, 'you know, *Call Of Duty* and *Halo* do really well. Why don't we take what they do and colour it green instead of blue,'" Levine continues. "At the end of the day, nobody's ever going to play a wannabe; they want an experience that's fresh and new."

Fortunately then *BioShock Infinite* looks to be exactly that, another exceptional world and another great entry into the 'Shock series. Buy this game, or we'll come round and nick all of your copies of *COD* and *Battlefield*. That's a fact.





HITMAN: ABSOLUTION

SUITED AND BOOTED FROM THE AGENCY

Betrayed by the assassination Agency that employed him for so long, on the run without even the soothing tones of former handler Diana and being hunted by every law-enforcement agency in the US, *Absolution* flips the standard *Hitman* roles: now it's seemingly 47 that has to escape from assassination, rather than his unfortunate victims.

Such a change has had fans up in arms, but we're confident that IO knows what it's doing. For starters, we'd be very surprised if the whole 'Hitman being hunted' angle isn't just an overarching story for the standard, free-form and semi-open hits to take place in, much as has happened in previous titles. Also, purists have vocally objected to the addition of the aforementioned new abilities: Agent 47 can now see through walls to target enemy patrols, and can even see where they plan to walk and attack accordingly.

If you couldn't switch these mechanics off we'd be worried, but you can and so naturally we're not. *Hitman* has always excelled at giving players all of the tools necessary to carry out the perfect hit and then leaving them to it. In the past that's led to frustration from certain quarters, but now we're more than confident that this will be a *Hitman* game that can appeal to everyone.

PUBLISHER

Square Enix

DEVELOPER

IO Interactive

RELEASE DATE

TBC 2012



THE DARKNESS II

THE END BEGINS

PUBLISHER

2K

DEVELOPER

Digital Extremes

RELEASE DATE

February 2012

Says Seth Olshfski, producer:
"We want to make a game that'll kick your ass. We want you really into the story, even if you're not a

story person. We want you really excited about skewering two enemies with a thrown parking meter. We want you to have fun playing *The Darkness II*, as much fun as we had making it."

Can you say fairer than that? We think not. With a fantastic art style, over-the-top gore and brilliant set pieces, this looks to have everything going for it to become a worthwhile sequel to an already excellent original.



MAX PAYNE 3

PAYNE AND SIMPLE?

PUBLISHER

Rockstar

DEVELOPER

Rockstar Studios

RELEASE DATE

March 2012

We feel a little bit sorry for Max Payne here at **Play**. After all, things haven't exactly gone well: his wife and kid are dead, he's become fat and shaved all of his hair off, people want to kill him *all the time*. Worst of all, however, is the fact that his latest game has been massively overshadowed by the announcement of *GTA V*.

Not that this has stopped Rockstar going on its typical promotional rampage for *Max Payne*, with the latest trailer showing off some seriously good animation and excellent graphics. The publisher has gone big on what it describes as "an intensely cinematic quality to gameplay as well as cut-scenes",

which essentially means leaping around shooting people's faces off. It worked well in the first two, after all.

While we're hoping that Max has a few new tricks up his, er, wife-beater, the grunt offered by *Max Payne*'s new engine promises to amplify the gunplay that made the other games great far beyond the first and second instalments. Waffle like "procedurally generated physics" might sound boring but in actuality it's what gives the game its excellent sense of reality, and with RAGE (the engine that powered *GTA* and *Red Dead*) back and also using Euphoria, *Max Payne 3* could be one of the best action games of next year.

The only thing troubling us about it so far then is the fact that the last two were so intentionally goofy that we'd hate for this one to lose that smirking, 'we know it's stupid to call a game *Max Payne*' attitude. Either way this is going to be one of next year's most interesting games.

ASSASSIN'S CREED III

THE REAL DEAL, OR ANOTHER REHASH?

PUBLISHER

Ubisoft

DEVELOPER

Ubisoft Montreal

RELEASE DATE

November 2012

In a move so brilliant/underhanded it would make Dick Dastardly smile knowingly, Ubi announced *Ass Creed III* before *Revelations* was even released. Anyway, with Ezio now out of the picture, our money's on a new time period, possibly Victorian London. Having said that, there have been rumours that the game might use Egypt as its backdrop. How cool would that be? Very. Very very very, but only if Ubisoft overhauls the creaking engine and AI faults that blighted *Revelations*, which was released recently to good but not great review scores. *Assassin's Creed III* needs to improve to keep the series' impressive sales from sliding.



“The important thing is she appears to be much more vulnerable, she’s not Teflon-coated – I think there’s going to be a much stronger emotional link with Lara in the new Tomb Raider than there has been before. And the gameplay and graphics are as spectacular as you’d imagine. **Ian Livingstone, Eidos Life President**”

12 IN 2012



TOMB RAIDER

RETURN OF THE FACE

PUBLISHER

Square Enix

DEVELOPER

Crystal Dynamics

RELEASE DATE

TBC 2012

“I’m really looking forward to the reboot... Why? Because it’s a new TR game, and also I maybe think the current team have looked at some of the old ideas...with Lara fighting for survival, very gritty, very real... so yeah it’s gonna be very interesting to see what they do with this one, after all they must raise the bar over the Uncharted franchise, which is currently stealing Lara’s thunder. **Richard Morton, former level designer on the Tomb Raider franchise**”

“We already made a decision from day one that this is a new vision. There’s no going back, there’s no paying homage to storylines that were once there. Once we’ve set forth, no matter how things progress from the next game, to one after and the next, we won’t be looking back.” **Karl Stewart, global brand director, Crystal Dynamics**

“With this new outing, they’ve got pretty much full creative control, and by completely reimagining Lara Crystal Dynamics looks to be taking the icon to a new level in quality. This is going to be one of the most exciting games of the year.” **X360**

“An ambitious undertaking by Crystal Dynamics, nearly every aspect of design has been overhauled, with animations more free flowing, the gameplay encompassing role-playing elements, while in narrative the studio has confidently retconned the established lore.” **games™**

“The biggest surprise that many seem to be overlooking with Lara’s reboot is its freedom. For a game all about adventure, *Tomb Raider* has always been fairly linear – but with the promise of open-ended exploration, Crystal Dynamics’ reboot could really hook into the best element of the IP and utilise that strength for a whole new game entirely.” **NowGamer**

SEVEN THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT TOMB RAIDER

1 NO EXCLUSIVE DLC?

In a vote on the official *Tomb Raider* forums, a poll was posted asking if fans would be in favour or against exclusive DLC. A staggering 94% voted against it.

2 YOU CAN'T BE LAZY

Animations won't be automatic and you can't pick up items just by running over them. Though it's still being tweaked, it seems as though you have to stop and pick them up.

3 LARA IS TOP STUDENT

"For anybody who hasn't noticed, pause the trailer when it gets to the table section, you'll see notes and markings from Lara's teacher," said Karl Stewart. "I think she gets an A!"

4 OLIVIA WILDE IS NOT LARA

On the subject of the new *Tomb Raider* movie, no one has been cast as Lara Croft yet and it's been confirmed that the rumours that Olivia Wilde is Lara definitely aren't true.

5 DEFINITIVE FINALE PROMISED

"When you get to the end of the game – and I know what happens at the end of the game – it has to be a definitive finale," explained Karl Stewart referring to DLC.

6 DAY/NIGHT CYCLE

"You are not going to stand in one place and over the course of time, the sun will set and the moon will rise. But you will feel like it's a persistent weather system."

7 THE MAIN THEME

The haunting, sad music in the trailer wasn't just used as a marketing gimmick. The music in the trailer will be the main theme for *Tomb Raider*.

'BIG BOOBS, BIG ASS, TWO GUNS'

"We were testing other characters and then testing Lara Croft," said global brand manager Karl Stewart of the research undertaken for *Tomb Raider*. "It did amaze us that with such a large group of people, there were a couple of thousand there, it got to people saying, 'well, big boobs, big ass, two guns, she's not really a human character any more. It's just an adventure with a caricature that I'm going on. She has so much money it belittles wanting to be an adventurer.' Things like that came back to us and it struck at our heartstrings that there was a realism to the direction that we're going in. Every decision we've made has been supported by the research that we've done."

JAPAN LOVES LARA

"After doing a study for a month or two with about 12,000 participants in five regions, even down to Japan," continues Stewart. "What we found was *Tomb Raider* had 90 per cent awareness or affinity rate. So people know who she was. They knew *Tomb Raider* and they liked it. There was only one other character that had 95 or 96 per cent affinity and awareness rate and that was Mario. When we looked at Japan, *Tomb Raider* was up in the 75 to 80s, which is about 40 per cent more than all Western characters. We were up there with the likes of Solid Snake and Mario again. Even the *Resident Evil* characters weren't as high as I would have assumed."

SEX APPEAL

"The team wanted to make her feel like she was a part of this crew and her outfit is a big part of that," says Brian Horton, art director. "We feel the design has struck the right balance of attractiveness and practicality. We didn't want her to have a uniform, so designing clothes that could be purchased in a store seemed like the correct choice. The shorts were never a part of the equation for us, nor being an icon of fashion. It just didn't feel right in context to her character or as a crew member on this expedition. If you feel this detracts from her sex appeal, I understand, but that was not our main goal."

NO GOBLINS ALLOWED

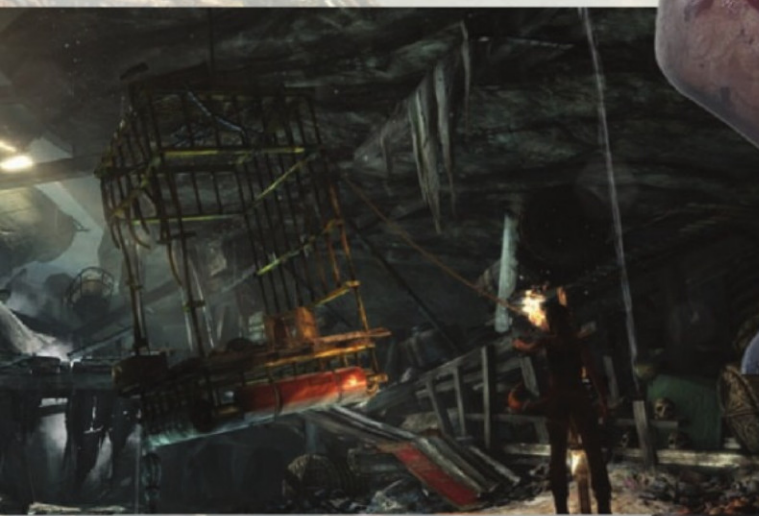
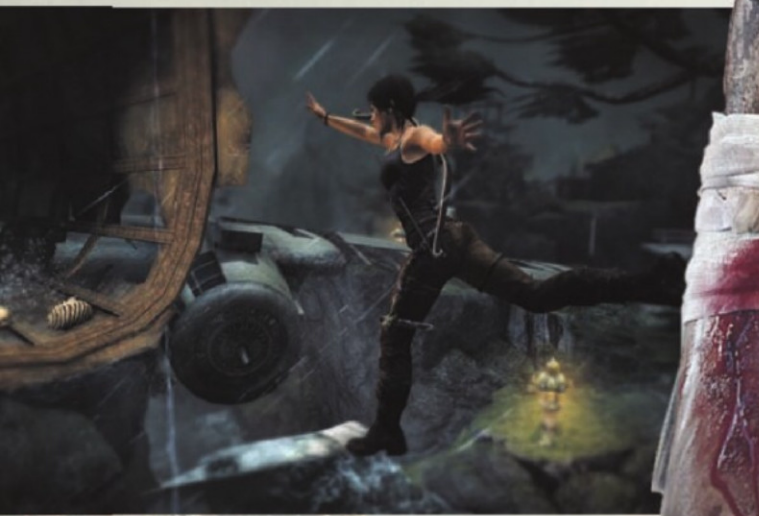
"We didn't have a story back then. It was just 'Lara's on an island! What are we going to do? Let's keep her on an island!' It was this real dark, fantasy-esque, goblins and creatures coming out of the ground... we quickly put that to rest and said, 'you know what, that's not who we are,'" says Stewart.



WHY TOMB R

It will be one of the standout games of next year and Crystal Dynamics explains why...

12 IN 2012



LARA'S 'GROUNDED' LOOK

"As a fan of the classics we wanted to nod to the original outfit in some way, and our first concept was of a light blue tank," explains Brian Horton. "We lived with that for a while and decided that a more neutral colour was more fitting the personality profile we are building for her in this origin story. We wanted to allow Lara to look understated, she's not interested in standing out because she hasn't yet achieved the confidence in herself."

THE RESEARCH ROOM

"Our research room has a one-way mirror with blinds behind it. Janus [Sorenson, user research manager] puts cameras on the people who are playing it, we put cameras on the actual gameplay and we pipe that out to the studio so people who are building specific levels can actually see people playing the levels. *Guardian Of Light* was one of the first projects that we made massive changes on that game, just on the basis that we've never had that type of research, or availability of that research, so close to home. We don't really use the one-way mirrors, it's there for show!"

AIDER ROCKS



THE LAST GUARDIAN

A BOY AND HIS CAT/BIRD THING

PUBLISHER

Ubisoft

DEVELOPER

Ubisoft Montreal

RELEASE DATE

November 2012

Play runs the rule over the latest *Last Guardian* rumours

We've met the main character before

Team Ico is well known for having its protagonists be ambiguous or shadowy, and this looks no different. *The Last Guardian*'s human character is yet another young man, but apart from that we know nothing. Could it be a return of Ico himself? No.

TRUTH RATING: ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

No one knows what that bird/cat thing is

Its name is Trico, which can be interpreted in different ways from the original Japanese, but one thing we're certain about is that it's definitely not going to spend its time bringing in dead frogs for the players. It'll be a mix of the two, probably.

TRUTH RATING: ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

The game will have multiple endings

Team Ico's previous games have ended on rather downbeat notes, but creator and designer Fumito Ueda has intimated that it might let you choose your own path. As such, we're betting yes, it will have different endings.

TRUTH RATING: ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

It's just another *Shadow Of The Colossus*

They look similar, and there's the same sense of exploration and otherworldliness. That said there's plenty to align it into the *Ico* camp, with puzzles and the need to guide Trico through the levels. We're going to say that it's a mix of the two, because Ueda also said words to that effect. So there.

TRUTH RATING: ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

It will have a HUD

Good questions. Team Ico games are all about atmosphere, and the addition of a whacking great head-up display all over the show seems to be a poor call. That said, how will all of that lovely information be conveyed? When will we know how to feed our cat/bird?

TRUTH RATING: ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

It will also be on Vita

What fresh madness is this? Although we'd love a version of the game to make an appearance on Sony's upcoming new console, we can't see it happening. We'll just have to play *Everybody's Golf* instead, crying onto our lovely new touch screens as we do it.

TRUTH RATING: ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

It's going to slip to 2013

No way. There was a chance after all that *The Last Guardian* was going to release by the end of 2011, but that's obviously not happened. Look for this to appear in shops around midyear as to avoid the real big hitters at Christmas. Hey: suits us.

TRUTH RATING: ■ ■ ■ ■ ■



“Team Ico's previous games have ended on – shall we say – rather downbeat notes, but creator and designer Fumito Ueda has intimated that the game might let you choose your own path through the game. As such, we're betting it will have different endings.”

STARHAWK

HAWKWIND!

PUBLISHER

Sony

DEVELOPER

LightBox Interactive

RELEASE DATE

February 2012

'Starhawk', eh? I take it some marketing suit just walked into the Warhawk developer's offices and said, 'Gentlemen, I've got the perfect idea: Warhawk... IN SPACE!'

Yeah, but *Warhawk* wasn't really that realistic to begin with now was it? It's not like *'Full Spectrum Warrior: Space Edition'*. Besides, this sequel isn't made by the original company that made *Warhawk* anyway.

What? Why? Won't the franchise be ruined?

Calm down, man, you're hysterical. The new developer, LightBox Interactive, was formed by members of Incognito, the company that made the last *'Hawk* game. So this should be absolutely fine.

I see. So why should I buy this?

Well, the 32-player battles that see players duking it out in both air and ground battles in extremely manoeuvrable aircraft will return, but intriguingly, there's also a selection of game modes that deviate from the template the last game set out. *Warhawk* was defiantly multiplayer only, but this time there are campaign, co-op and

Horde-style modes. There's even a story: some standard fare about intergalactic farmers who come under attack, lose their livelihoods (and their humanity, succumbing to an infection that the attacking 'Outcast' forces bring with them) and have to fight back. The *Starhawk* universe looks rich enough gameplay-wise to support a campaign mode: space-based dogfighting followed by ground warfare followed by RTS base-building via the originally titled 'Build N Battle' system? Yes, please. With the avalanche of hype and bluster that other games will be getting next year, remember to keep an eye out for this: it could turn out to be one of PS3's best online games.



DEAD SPACE 3

FIVE MYSTERIES TO BE SOLVED

PUBLISHER

EA

DEVELOPER

Visceral Games

RELEASE DATE

TBC 2012

1 THE ULTIMATE PLAN

Dead Space 2's ending is rather ambiguous as to the Unitologists' actual plan. It's hinted that there's a whole galaxy of Unitologist bad guys out there pulling the strings behind the scenes, each seemingly with a different goal. But what do they really want? And how are they going to achieve it?

2 CRAZY ON YOU

Anyone who has played the second game probably is aware that young Mr Clarke has gone, to put it mildly, round the frickin' bend. Or has he? Didn't he expunge the last remnants of his savage guilt for his other half's death? Maybe. But these are videogames, people. Don't be surprised if Isaac relapses.

3 REVENGE OF THE EX

Speaking of Isaac's crazy brain malfunction, can we be sure that Nicole – and the Marker infection – won't come back to haunt his mind? If so, how will it manifest itself: more psychological battles, or the new 'Shadow Isaac' that we've been hearing rumbles of?

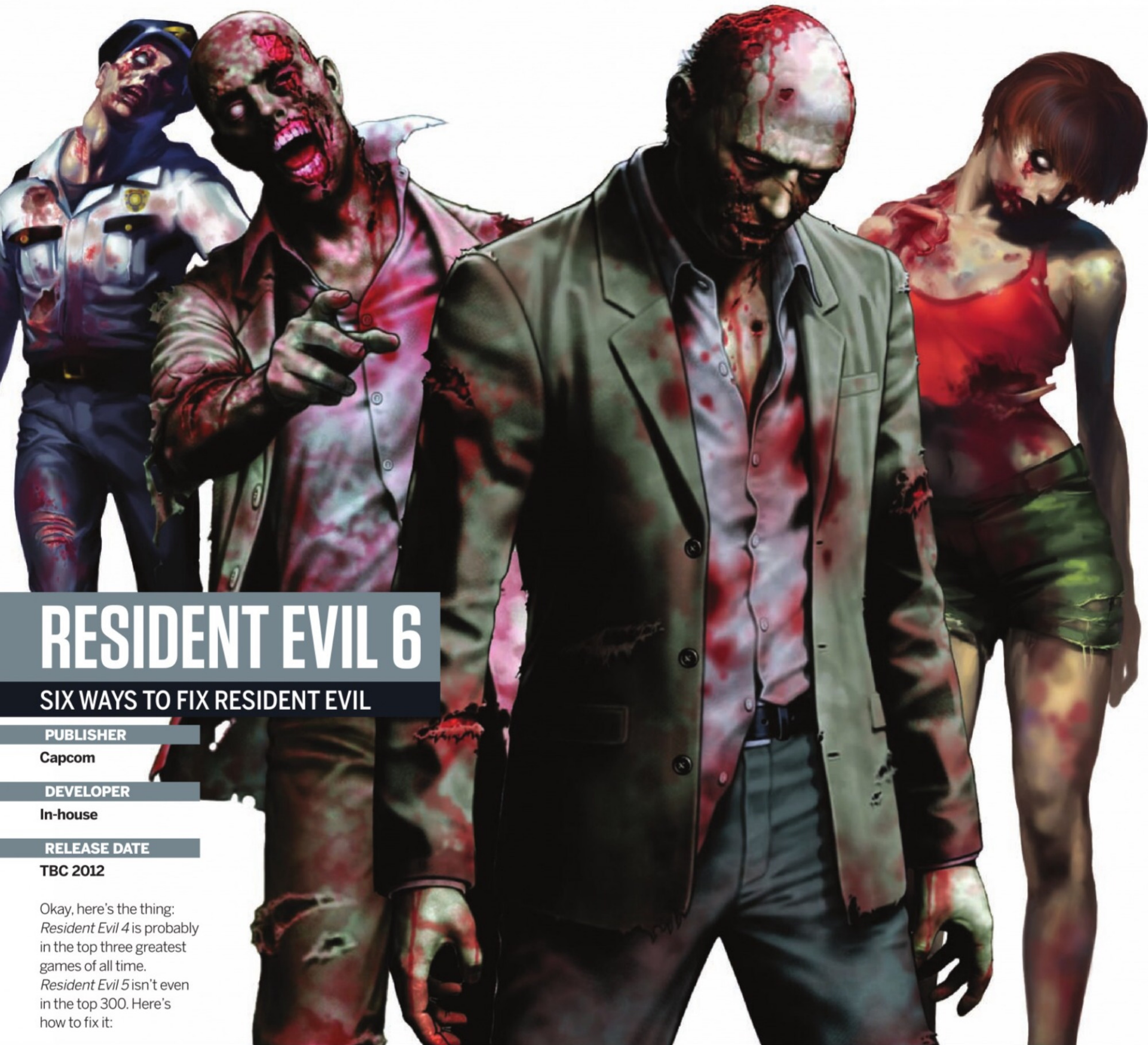
4 MARK IT ZERO

Did Isaac really rebuild the Marker during the three-year gap between the first and second games? If so, why? And what do the massively destructive artefacts *really* mean in the grand scheme of things. The conspiracy of the Church of Unitology will surely also have to be uncovered.

5 WAVE OF THE FUTURE

For all of his apparent misdeeds, Isaac ends *Dead Space 2* having helped Ellie escape from the clutches of the Necromorph infection. However, the long-term question remains as to what effect the exposure will have had on her mind. Is she destined to haunt Isaac in the same way Nicole did?





RESIDENT EVIL 6

SIX WAYS TO FIX RESIDENT EVIL

PUBLISHER

Capcom

DEVELOPER

In-house

RELEASE DATE

TBC 2012

Okay, here's the thing: *Resident Evil 4* is probably in the top three greatest games of all time. *Resident Evil 5* isn't even in the top 300. Here's how to fix it:

1 GET BACK TO BASICS

Resident Evil started life as a quirky, difficult adventure game that hated its players and wanted them dead, yesterday. *Resi 4* and *5* took a more action-orientated stance, but we'd love the old scares back: that gnawing feeling of dread as you realise you haven't saved in three hours and the only place to do it is miles away and crawling with beasts. Ace.

2 GET RID OF CO-OP

Resident Evil 5 had one of the worst co-op partners in living memory in the shape of Sheva Alomar, an addition so useless that Capcom could only have topped it by throwing in a LaserDisc of the game's soundtrack. Admittedly, with two players you were rid of this, but come on: how can you be afraid when there's two of you running around? Exactly.

3 PROMOTE THE MERCENARIES MODE

The Mercenaries mode – a score-attack minigame that unlocks when you finish the main game in *Resi 4* and *5* – is hands down better than pretty much every other action game out there, and is at least as good an experience as *Resident Evil 4* itself. So, Capcom, start advertising this as a two-for-one package and you'll be golden.

4 DITCH THE OVER-THE-TOP PLOTTING

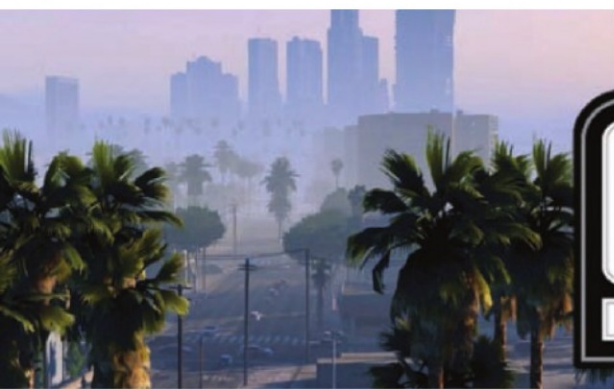
Okay, so technically all of the plotting in the *Resident Evil* franchise is over the top, but what we mean is make the scenario something smaller yet no less terrifying. We don't need to fight in an active volcano to be scared out of our goddamn minds: a locked door and three rounds left will do the trick just as well.

5 BRING BACK ZOMBIES

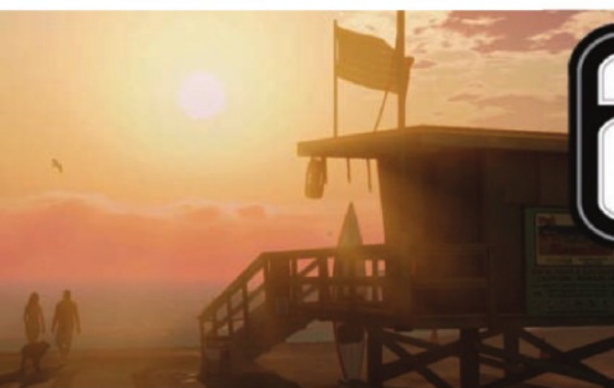
We've got nothing against the quasi-intelligent, parasitic villagers featured in *Resident Evil 4* and *5*, but there's something extremely unsettling and scary about zombies. And we're not talking about those fake running zombies, either: the shuffling hordes will do just fine thank you very much. Oh, and no more frogs, Capcom. They're not scary.

6 USE RESI 3'S BRANCHING NARRATIVE SYSTEM

Resident Evil 3's Live Selection mechanic gave players the choice of how they dealt with important scenarios – essentially fight or flight – with differing gameplay and narrative outcomes based on the choices made. We would like to see that return in *Resident Evil 6*: linear narrative is fine, but choice is always a good thing.



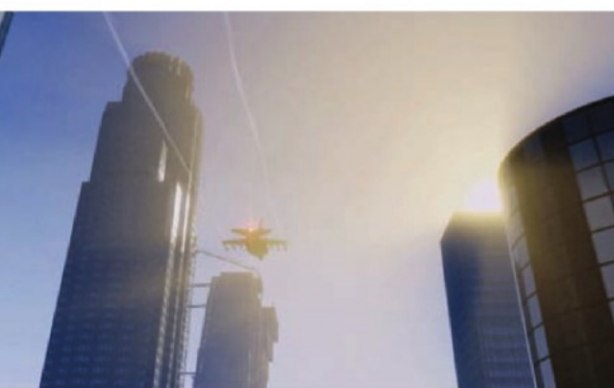
■ Glad to see that Rockstar has got LA's choking smog down pat.



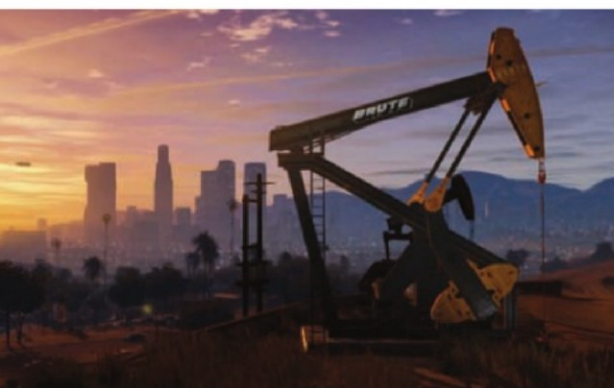
■ We're not sure we agree with the use of animals in the game, if only because that's going to be a politically hot issue.



■ "AK-47 is the tool, don't make me act the mother-beeping fool."



■ Need we even say anything?



■ The land of opportunity, but only if you're a criminal scumbag. Hey, that's us!

Grand Theft Auto V

“San Andreas is bursting with opportunity both as a map and a social setting. Although it now seems unlikely that San Fierro and Las Venturas will return, the environments shown in the trailer seem diverse enough to stave off boredom. Could turn out to be the greatest thing ever.”

IT'S ALL COMING BACK TO ME NOW

PUBLISHER

Rockstar Games

DEVELOPER

Rockstar North

RELEASE DATE

TBC 2012

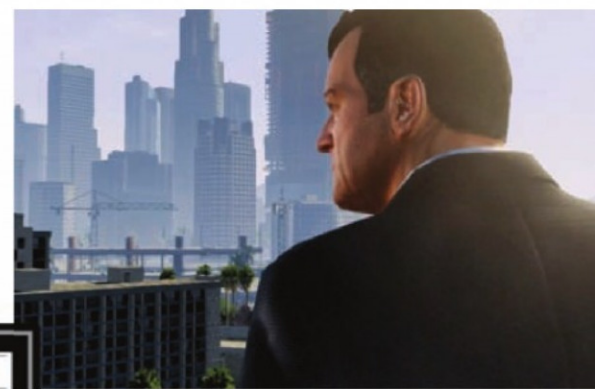
The key question for Rockstar on *GTA V* – more important than who the main character is, or whether you can fly fighter jets into buildings – is ‘when does it come out?’ No date has been released at the time of writing, but **Play** has its fingers crossed for a mid-2012 launch.

Whether that will actually happen is debatable, especially with Rockstar's own *Max Payne* launching in a similar time frame. That said, however, if Rockstar does opt for a late 2012 release can it overcome the *Call Of Duty* juggernaut?

“I think that the April-May-June time frame is the smart one, as the game will still benefit at holiday, but will face little competition at launch,” says industry analyst Michael Pachter. “It is difficult to launch in the *Call Of Duty* window, and I think that the Rockstar guys would like their game to be at the top of mindshare heading into E3.”

Can't say we're going to argue with that: after all, just get *Max Payne 3* out the door a month earlier and then ramp up to *GTA*.

As for the features we expect to see in the game, we'd be very surprised if this wasn't a slightly more knockabout romp than the last game. San Andreas is bursting with opportunity both as a map and a social setting. Although it now seems unlikely that San Fierro and Las Venturas will return (although we'd love to be proven wrong on that count) the environments shown in the trailer seem diverse enough to stave off boredom. All the game needs now is the inclusion of BMXs and it'll probably be the greatest thing ever.



■ Apparently this guy is played by Hollywood character actor Ned Luke. Google him.



■ With the recession being one of the core story threads, we better be able to buy up cheap real estate.



■ Admit it: you're going to riddle these people with machine gun fire posthaste.



■ Our money's on multiple playable characters.

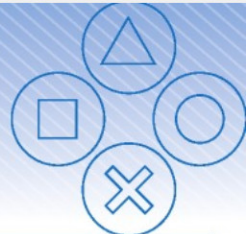


■ The return of the workout minigame, or scene-setting red herring?

61 WAYS TO BOOST YOUR PLAYSTATION 3

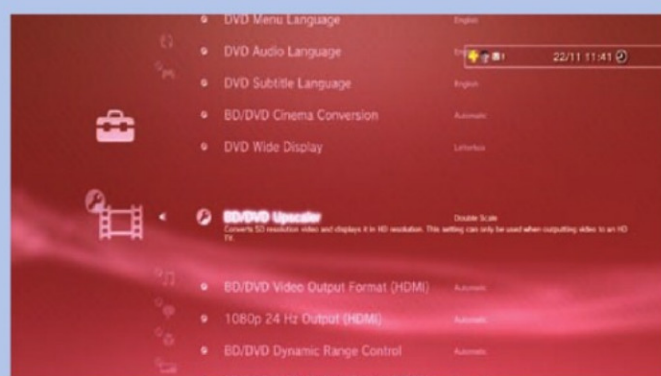
Your PS3 is more customisable than you might have noticed. Here we present 61 things you can do to tweak, upgrade, improve or simply change your console experience





1 MAKE IT LOOK THE BEST IT CAN

Depending on how your console is connected to your TV – and depending on your TV – you will have a selection of display modes and resolutions available to you. The absolute best you can get right now on PS3 is via an HDMI lead with a telly capable of outputting 1080p. The easiest way to see what your television or monitor can output is to go to the video output settings option under 'Display settings'. Choose the method by which you are connected to your TV and then, if the option presents itself (it does with HDMI), choose 'automatic'. The PS3 will do all of the hard work and leave you with the highest resolution picture your display can currently output. Of course, choosing 'custom' allows you to set a resolution of your choice – though this might mean a black screen if your TV or monitor can't hit a high enough resolution. While HDMI is the ideal, component still produces a high-def image, though it isn't capable of full 1080p. S-Video/composite is... well, if you're using that you really shouldn't be, and SCART is the best quality standard-definition image you can get. The cable provided with your PS3 is *not* a SCART lead, though.



2 OPTIMISE VIDEO & AUDIO

A few tweaks here and there in the 'Video settings' category can render your viewing experience a fair bit better, at least when operating through HDMI (as you should be doing). There are numerous other options, but the main settings you want to have are: 'BD/DVD upscaler' – normal; 'BD/DVD video output format' – Y Pb/Cb Pr/Cr; '1080p 24 Hz output' – automatic; 'cinema conversion' – automatic. A quick jaunt down to 'Display settings' and check these other two options: 'RGB full range HDMI' – full; 'Y Pb/Cb Pr/Cr super-white' – on. Throw in a couple of audio settings to check off, too (both under 'Video settings', for some reason): 'BD/DVD audio output format (HDMI)' – Linear PCM; 'BD audio output format (optical)' – Linear PCM. With all of these settings in place – while only a general idea, as we can't possibly cover every single setup every single one of our readers has – you'll have a better viewing and listening experience. Of course, if you're watching through component then most of these settings won't apply, as they're for HDMI – and if you're on anything displaying standard definition then there isn't much point paying attention to any of the options.

3 CUSTOMISE YOUR XMB

Themes aren't just a background – they're an entire character for your console. Fortunately you don't have to make do with the free and premium ones thrown your way on PSN and can in fact install (and even create) your own. While other sources are available, www.ps3-themes.com is a fine website for your customisation needs. Head to the site on the PS3's browser and find a theme you are interested in. Choose to download it, and once it has installed head to 'Theme settings', then 'Theme' – the new download will be on the list. Select it, and you're ready to go. You can also download themes to your computer and transfer them to PS3 using a USB memory stick (or other compatible media). Create a folder called PS3, inside that another folder called THEME (this *has* to be in upper case) and put the .pt3 file in there. Head to the theme option as before and choose 'install' at the top of the screen – the theme will then become available to select on the list just as in the other method. Check all over the 'net for some genuinely great themes to make your console that bit more interesting.



SETTINGS

WHAT TO CHANGE AND WHY TO CHANGE IT

MAKE RETRO GAMES LOOK BETTER

4 Under 'Game settings' you can implement upscaling and smoothing for PSone games. It doesn't make a huge difference, but you might as well use them.

PERFECT THE SOUND OUTPUT

5 Under 'Sound settings' you can change what the sound is outputted through – we'd recommend HDMI through an amp, but obviously choose whatever setting suits you.

OPTIMISE ONLINE CONNECTIONS

6 'Network settings' allows you to change your connection type (wired is better, if possible) and other more advanced settings. You can also run a test to see if things are working.

FRESHEN UP THE WALLPAPER

7 Any image on your console can be used as a background wallpaper. Press **△** while viewing a picture and select the 'Set as wallpaper' option on the top row.

ACCESS YOUR SAVES ANYWHERE

8 If you're a PlayStation Plus subscriber you can take advantage of cloud storage. Press **△** on a save, select copy and choose to store it in online storage.

FRESHEN UP YOUR PS3

9 It seems obvious and you're prompted to do it, but just so you're aware: you can manually check for firmware updates using the 'System update' option.

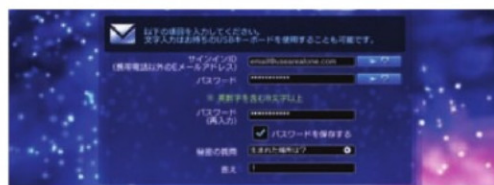
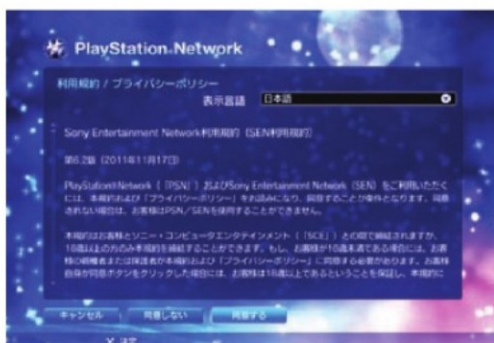
10 LEARN TO GET MORE PSN CONTENT

A Japanese PSN account allows you access to more content than your own region's account. Follow these steps to set one up.



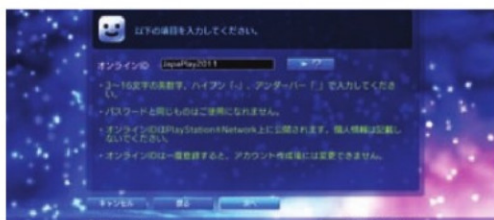
01 Create a new user on your PS3, then choose to sign up for PSN and create a new account.

02 Set your country to Japan and set a date of birth, then choose the highlighted icon to continue.



03 Accept the terms by selecting the bottom right icon again.

04 The top box needs an email address. Second and third needs the same password – letters and numbers, at least eight characters. Tick the box to remember the password. Leave the pull-down box, but put an answer you will remember in the last box. Continue with the bottom right button.



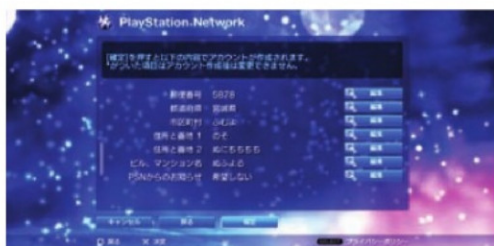
05 Enter a PSN ID. If it isn't allowed, you won't be able to continue. As soon as you are, the bottom right button is where to head again.

06 Enter anything here. Bottom right button to continue.



07 The first box needs a number, but every other box can be anything. Bottom right box to continue.

08 Leave this box unchecked unless you want to receive marketing mail. Bottom right to continue.



09 Scroll to the bottom, confirm your details with the bottom right button. It may take a few seconds to react – don't worry.

10 And that's sorted – you can now access the Japanese PSN. Have a look around, it's quite interesting.

HARDWARE

WHAT TO BUY, WHAT TO USE, HOW TO CONNECT, HOW TO PLAY

SPEED UP YOUR STORAGE

11 If you're made of money and want quicker hard drive access, pick up a solid state hard drive. They're expensive, though.

VALUE FOR MONEY HDMI

12 When buying an HDMI lead under six feet price makes no difference to quality. Buy cheap.

SOUND SYSTEMS MATTER

13 Your PS3 can output through any number of speaker systems – splash out on Dolby 5.1 or even 7.1 for the best audio experience.

THE BEST AUDIO QUALITY

14 Analog and optical connections are available, but HDMI is the way to connect your console to your amp/receiver.

OPTIMISE TV SETTINGS

15 Unfortunately it's different with every brand and model of TV, but changing settings on the unit can make big changes to your gaming picture.

CONNECT EVEN MORE PADS

16 Extra pads might seem an obvious point, but did you know you can connect up to seven controllers at the same time?

PROLONG YOUR PS3'S LIFE

17 Not so much with newer PS3s, but older ones can overheat. Extra cooling, such as USB-attached fans, might be necessary.

STRENGTHEN THE SIGNAL

18 A wired online connection is always better than wireless – but remember Ethernet cable length does matter: the shorter the cable is, the better.

KEEP THINGS CHARGED

19 Pick up a cheap USB A-male to mini-B cable measuring longer than the one coming with the PS3 and you can play and charge in comfort.

CHARGE YOUR PADS WHILE NOT PLAYING

20 Pads don't charge while the PS3 is off – pick up a separate charger unit to combat this minor irritation and add juice while not gaming.

ACCESSORISE WITH BLUETOOTH

21 Headsets, keyboards, mice, controllers – there's a plethora of peripherals that

connect using Bluetooth, and a simple option under 'Accessory settings' allows you to pair devices to your PS3.

GET MORE CONTROL

22 You wouldn't be getting the most out of your console if you didn't pick up a Move controller. Though admittedly they're not essential.

IMPROVE BLU-RAY CONTROL

23 Some find it more comfortable to use a remote control for Blu-ray playback. Sony's own peripheral does the job perfectly.

FUTUREPROOF YOUR PS3

24 Purchasing Move nets you one, but PlayStation Eye is a decent purchase even without the waggles. Plus future functionality – video calls etc – could make it essential.

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR IMAGES

25 Often overlooked is the feature allowing you to print from your PS3. Connect printer to console, select the printer option and sync it up – go from there.

GET THE EDGE WITH ONLINE COMMUNICATION

26 Cross-game chat isn't happening, but standard chat exists. For some reason Sony still doesn't include a headset with the console – most Bluetooth pieces work with PS3.

GET MORE USB SLOTS

27 Slim PS3s only have two USB slots – in time you may need more. USB hubs are your friend.

BETTER HEADPHONES = BETTER SOUND

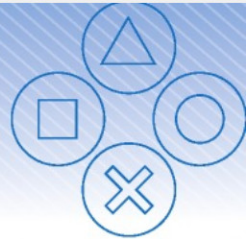
28 Certain headphones, such as Astro-branded cans, can be hooked up directly to the PS3. They're not cheap, mind.

TYPING MADE EASY

29 If you send a lot of messages or play MMOs on PS3, most USB keyboards function on the console. It makes your tappy-tapping a lot easier.

MICE MAKE YOU MORE PRECISE

30 Mice are compatible with PS3, both wired and wireless varieties, and can be used on a few games – as well as the upcoming *Counter Strike: Global Offensive*.



31 IMMEDIATELY FIX YOUR PS3

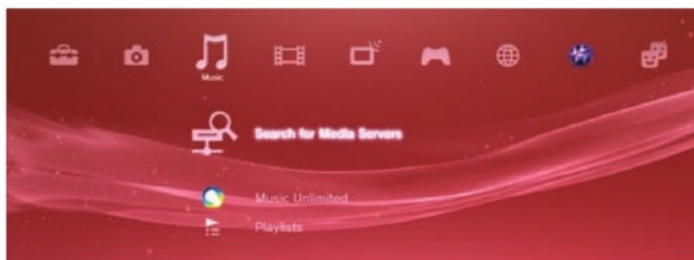
When things go wrong, when other options haven't helped and when you need something to try to sort it all out, you can resort to the recovery menu. Through this feature, added in firmware 2.5, extra options are available to help fix an unruly console. Accessing it is simple enough – hold down the power button on turning the PS3 on, it will beep a second time, then turn off. Then hold the power button to switch it on again, this time it will beep a second time, then beep twice in a row – let go at this point and the recovery menu will appear. You will need a USB lead connected to your pad to be able to access it, by the way.

The options work as follows: 'Restart system' does exactly that, making no changes; 'Restore default settings' switches everything back to factory settings, at least when it comes to date and time, network options, video settings and so on – it does not delete any data; 'Restore file system' rebuilds the file system the PS3 requires to boot up, and will not delete any saved data; 'Rebuild database' is useful for those plagued by undeletable corrupted data, though it takes a while it will attempt to reform any corrupt or missing files, and will not delete saves or settings; 'Restore PS3 system' will delete everything – settings, saves, data, *everything*, apart from your current firmware version. It's a last resort. Finally 'System update' allows users to update their console via USB/flash media in cases where they are unable to update via the XMB.

32 RECEIVE MEDIA WIRELESSLY

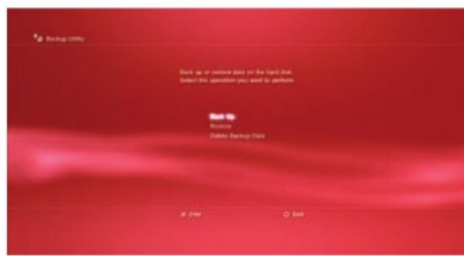
Using the wonder that is wireless media streaming, the PS3 is capable of playing content and viewing images stored on any computer in your local network – as long as it's sharing, of course. The first thing you'll need is decent streaming media software, for which we'd recommend TVersion. Follow the instructions on the software to install to your PC or Mac and choose what files you want to share, then move on to your PS3. Turn the machine on and check in the video, music or photo columns to see if a TVersion logo with the name of your computer is listed. If it is, simply click through, browse the files you have available and play them like any other

media file. If the icon doesn't show, use the 'Search for media servers' option to make your PS3 scan for the sharing service you set up. If it still doesn't show then try a reset of both your computer and console – and do double-check TVersion is running in the first place. There can sometimes be connection issues and you might want to make sure you haven't made your computer's contents available to everyone in a four-mile radius, but TVersion (and media sharing in general) is a fantastic way to get the most out of your PS3 in a multi-computer household, as well as allowing you to view and hear your content through your TV and sound system.



33 INCREASE YOUR STORAGE SPACE

Replace your hard drive with a bigger one – it's simple, fairly cheap and means you can store much more on your console. All you'll need is a replacement 2.5-inch laptop hard drive (up to 1TB in size) and a small, Phillips head screwdriver.



01 Insert a USB memory stick or external hard drive, navigate to 'Backup utility' in 'System settings' and choose 'Back up'. This means your saves and other settings won't be lost.



02 Remove the plastic cover here and remove the blue screw underneath.



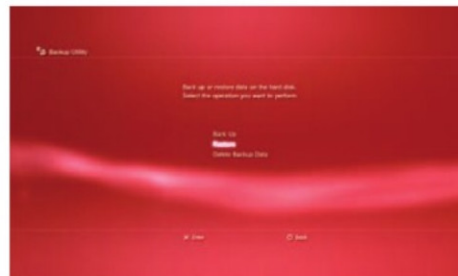
03 Remove the front panel, below the Blu-ray drive.



04 Using the lever, pull out the hard drive. Remove the four small screws on the underside and take the drive out of the caddy. Replace it with the new HDD.



05 Screw the replacement into the caddy (not too tight) and place it into the PS3 – give it a push to make sure it's in place. Then replace the cover, screw and small panel.



06 Switch on your PlayStation 3, and once it has sorted itself out navigate again to 'Backup utility'. Plug in the drive you used to store your backed up data and choose 'Restore'.

TIPS

A FEW LITTLE SNIPPETS TO IMPROVE YOUR EXPERIENCE

GET MORE HDD SPACE

34 Always keep tabs on available space – delete old install data in the 'Game data utility' and, if you need to, format the hard drive via 'System settings'.

UNLIMITED RETRO SAVE SPACE

35 Before playing PS2 or PSone games you will need to set up a memory card for them. Do this using the 'Memory card utility' as many times as necessary.

PLAY GAMES FROM ANYWHERE

36 All PlayStation 3 games are Region Free – you can buy them from anywhere in the world and play them. Also, numerous Blu-rays are Region Free.

DISPLAY EVERYTHING

37 With a USB or other memory device inserted into the console, hit Δ on it and choose 'Display all'. Your files will no longer be MIA.

USE PS3 TO GET THE MOST FROM A PARTY

38 Set a music playlist going, then start a photo slideshow and you have a cute bit of background noise/visuals for any house party. No, really.

LITTLE EXTRAS

THE TINY TOUCHES YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW ABOUT

SAVE POWER, SAVE MONEY

39 Fat PS3s require you to hold the power button on the front of the console for six seconds before they switch off. Not on slims, though.

MAKE SURE YOUR FAN WORKS

40 Unplug the power cable and hold the eject button before plugging it back in to instigate a fan test. Make sure your PlayStation 3 isn't already hot beforehand.

SAVE YOUR PAD'S BATTERY

41 Need to turn your pad off? Simply hold the PS button for ten seconds – it'll power right down.

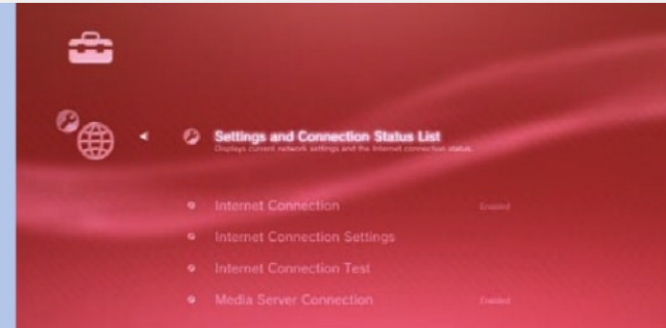
SOLVE YOUR DISPLAY ISSUES

42 When switching your console on, hold the power button until you hear a second beep. This resets the video mode to the lowest resolution.



43 CREATE A VIDEO MASTERPIECE

An overlooked addition to PS3's repertoire is the ability to edit video and upload the results to Facebook or YouTube (or just save it on your hard drive). The best thing is, it's actually quite simple. Navigate to the 'Video' column and choose the 'Editor/uploader' option – this will prompt a small download the first time. Once finished, choose the icon to load it up and select 'Create new video'. From here, press 'Add' to import any videos you have stored on your console or storage media, then choose continue. On the edit screen you can cut and change the video, add text and generally re-make the video you've chosen to mess about with. If you want to incorporate more videos, just choose the 'Add' option again, as before, and you can splice footage in together. Once you've finished it all, choose 'Play' to preview your new video – if more changes are needed, get back to work; if you're happy, select 'Finish'. You can then choose to save your creation to the local hard drive or to upload it to the aforementioned social media sites. Just be wary of copyrighted content – you will get into trouble if you go messing about with someone else's content and trying to pass it off as your own.



44 KILL YOUR LAG

Putting your PS3 into a DMZ (demilitarised zone) can help with a number of connectivity and online issues, so it's worth doing if you suffer problems playing through a network. It does involve a lot of tinkering, though. First go to 'Network settings' and choose 'Settings and connection status list' – make a note of the numbers for IP address and default router. Now go to 'Internet connection settings' and choose 'Custom'; select 'Wired' or 'Wireless' depending on your connection, proceed as normal until you reach 'IP address' – choose 'Manual'. Here you input the IP address you noted down, but change the last number to anything up to 255 – just go for something random in the middle. 'Default router' and 'Primary DNS' is where you should put the second set of numbers you took down – leave the other settings alone and confirm, making sure to note down the new IP address you chose. Select the default options for the remaining prompts and get ready to move on to your router settings. Here you will need to employ Google and find out how to get to the administrator settings and how to set up a DMZ – we can't help as every brand of router is different. What we can help with is that the DMZ settings on the router is where you enter the IP address you changed your PS3 to. Save, reboot, boot up your PS3 and test the connection – it should connect as normal and you should no longer suffer niggling little online issues.

45 DOWNLOAD US EXCLUSIVE PSN CONTENT

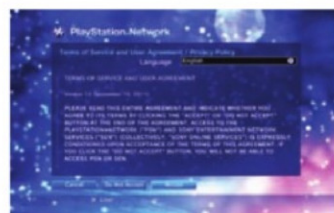
US accounts allow access to different content to the UK – earlier demos, different sales and other such elements. As such, it's useful to have a US account. Follow these steps to set one up.



01 Create a new user on your console, choose to sign up for PSN and create a new account.



02 Set your country to United States, the rest as you please.



03 Accept!



04 This is all straightforward – use a real email address, a password you remember and an answer you won't forget.



05 Pick a PSN ID for yourself – you'll be told if you can't use it.



06 Put whatever you want here, but we wouldn't encourage you to lie.



07 The address section only really needs a real zip code – we know 90210 from TV, so we used that. It works fine.



08 Leave these empty unless you want marketing mails.



09 Double-check your details and click confirm to create the account.



10 Enjoy the PlayStation Store with some slightly different content!



MEDIA

WATCHING, VIEWING AND LISTENING PLEASURE

WATCH ANYTHING, AT ANY TIME

46 The PS3 is capable of playing numerous video formats. Once they're on your console – downloaded, USB memory stick and so on – they can be watched on TV.

DISPLAY IMAGES BEAUTIFULLY

47 It's not just screens grabbed from games with photo modes – you can view 'proper' photos through your PS3. Use  to access the great slideshow effects, too.

GET AN EPIC SOUNDTRACK

48 Just as with photos, you can listen to your own music through PS3. Or you can use Music Unlimited, an accomplished subscription-based Spotify-a-like.

GET EVERY MUSIC VIDEO EVER

49 It was interesting when it launched but functionality was odd. Vidzone has been revamped, though, and is now brilliant for your music video streaming antics.

MAKE THE MOST OF HOME

50 Sony is always updating and improving Home, to the point where a recent update has made it *not entirely terrible*. Install it for free and have a muck about.

PLAY YOUR GAMES ANYWHERE

51 Minis and PSone games downloaded to your PS3 can be transferred to PSP and played on the move. Simply copy to a memory stick or transfer via USB connection.

GET YOUR GAMES CHEAPER

52 PSN downloads can be shared between two consoles, though this means you'll have to share account log-in details. Still, if you club together it means half-price purchases.

MOVE AND SHARE YOUR SAVES

53 Some saves are protected from copying, but those that aren't can be shared with friends and the rest of the world by using the copy function.

GET OTHERS TO DO THE WORK

54 You can download save files to use on your own games – they're all over the internet, with GameFAQs being a very good source.

PLAY PLAYSTATION'S HISTORY

55 It's sometimes forgotten that every model of PlayStation 3 is capable of playing PSone games. Hit up eBay and get some bargainous classics to play.

WATCH THE BIGGEST BLOCKBUSTERS

56 Using LoveFilm (for your mainstream movie needs) and MUBI (for the more arthouse selections) it's possible to watch thousands of different movies, streamed online almost instantly.

VIEW THE FINEST TV

57 Under the 'My channels' option on the XMB you will find things like BBC's iPlayer and 4OD – perfect (and free) methods with which to watch some great TV.

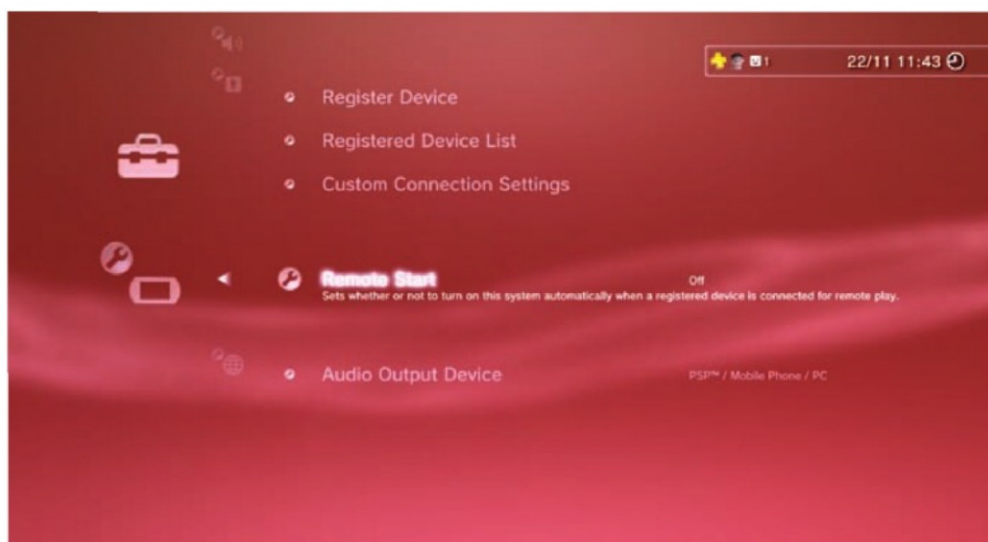
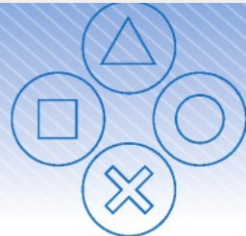
RECORD DIGITAL TV

58 PlayTV lets you watch digital TV through your PS3 – though the far more useful feature is the ability to record shows to your hard drive. Never miss *Match Of The Day* again!

GET BETTER CONTROL ON PSP

59 A DualShock 3 can be synced with the PSPgo, allowing you to control games on the handheld with your PS3 controller. You can't do it with older PSPs, unfortunately.

61 WAYS TO BOOST YOUR PS3



60 PLAY YOUR PS3 FROM WHEREVER YOU ARE IN THE WORLD

Remote Play allows you to stream what your PS3 is doing to your PSP – from anywhere in the world, if set up correctly. It's not hugely useful for PS3 games, with only 20 or so games (*Lair*, *Bejeweled 2*, *PixelJunk Monsters*, *Bionic Commando: Rearmed*, *BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger* and a few more) having any real functionality through it. But for other uses it's actually quite handy, such as playing PSone games, viewing photos, watching movies and Life With PlayStation. A few bigger things, like Blu-rays and PS2 games (if you own a backwards compatible console) don't work through remote play.

First pair the PSP you intend to use – follow the instructions via 'Remote play

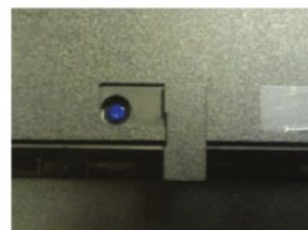
settings' and 'Register device'. Once this is done, set 'Remote start' to on and switch off your PS3. Now choose 'Remote play' in the 'Network' column on your PSP and select 'Connect via private network' – once connected you should be presented with your PS3's XMB. Note you can also choose to put your PS3 in remote play ready mode manually, by choosing the option on the PS3's 'Network' column. It can be a bit of a pain to get things working through multiple access points and routers, but it is possible and means you can access your PS3 from anywhere in the world, so long as you have an internet connection on both ends and the console is correctly set up before you leave it.

61 RETRIEVE LOST DISCS

If a disc gets stuck in your fat PS3 and holding eject for ten or so seconds doesn't help then you're looking at needing professional help. Those with slim consoles, however, can take a few steps to get the stuck disc out manually.



01 You will need a small Phillips head screwdriver with a head one inch or more long. Flip your PS3 over and look for the highlighted cover.



02 Take the small plastic cover off – don't pull too hard or you might snap a plastic piece inside the console.



03 Push the screwdriver through to the screw on the right (not the blue one) and turn it anticlockwise to eject the disc.

A cinematic shot of Nathan Drake running across a rooftop in the rain. He is wearing his signature white shirt, dark vest, and scarf. In the background, other characters are visible in the rain, and a sign with the word "DEFLECTION" is partially visible.

THE SHOCKING

A cinematic shot of Nathan Drake in a jungle environment. He is wearing a light-colored shirt and suspenders, looking intently at something off-camera. The background features lush greenery and a large, ornate structure.

OF UNCHARTED

Naughty Dog talks to **Play** about the future of the series, the intense pressure and why Drake could die...





Having just created the third part of PlayStation 3's defining series, Naughty Dog's lead designer, Richard Lemarchand, talks to David Crookes about everything to do with the biggest series on PlayStation3.
BIG SPOILERS!

SECRETS

by Naughty Dog

Richard Lemarchand has been introducing journalists and fellow games developers to his parents. He seems proud, as do they. Lemarchand is a few days away from the release of *Uncharted 3*, on which he was lead designer, and this British-born games developer is feeling as excited as Nathan Drake discovering the fate of a Spanish expedition. It has been getting incredible reviews, and crowds are gathering to hear him talk. His parents have beaming smiles.

But before he goes away to show some selected scenes from all three games in the *Uncharted* series, he sits down with *Play*. He starts to discuss his passion for old games – “I loved *Galaxians*,” he says of the days when he would play on his ZX81 or on the arcades in the local fish and chip shop – and we learn of his passion for design which was nurtured while reading for dual honours degrees in physics and philosophy at Oxford University.

It doesn't take long for us to begin discussing *Uncharted 3*, however. And so we start: “There's a moment in *Uncharted 3* when it seems Sully's been killed...” He looks aghast. “No,” he says. “Only for him to come back,” we continue. “When is this being published?” he asks. “Oh, it hurts me that you would reveal that part of the game...”

Was there serious discussion regarding actually killing him off?

It's really hard to know how to answer that question. Things like that are the magic that makes a game tick and we at Naughty Dog work incredibly hard all the way throughout, from the moment when we announce the game to the moment when a game is released. We're careful to only show sequences of a game that aren't going to spoil the story for people. You would be staggered by how much thought and time and effort we have to put into choosing the sequences of gameplay that we're going to show so that we don't mess up people's experience of and enjoyment of a story which hangs so much on surprises. ➤



What next for Naughty Dog?

IT IS DIFFICULT to see a future for Naughty Dog that doesn't include *Uncharted* nor, for that matter, *Jak* (2012 brings with it *The Jak And Daxter HD Collection* which takes the PlayStation 2 titles *Jak And Daxter: The Precursor Legacy*, *Jak II* and *Jak 3* and slaps them on a Blu-ray Disc, all ported by Sony Computer Entertainment).

Evan Wells, the co-president of Naughty Dog, spoke to Games Informer in July this year and confessed to not knowing what the future holds, although he did discuss supporting *Uncharted 3* with much downloadable content and the developer's intention to create and maintain a strong multiplayer community.

There is so much demand for *Uncharted* games, that we wouldn't be surprised at all if Naughty Dog become a one-game developer. And the more attention it puts on these games, the better, for they are indeed a brilliant series of titles.

> **The game ends with all the major protagonists still alive. Would you ever kill off any of the big three, and if not why not?**

Again, it's tricky. I suppose if this is going to be flagged as spoilers then so be it, you know, and we have to go with it. But that's not the kind of information that we would ever want a player to know when they picked up the game because anything could happen in the world of *Uncharted*.

But would you consider it?

Any of the characters could die because the stakes in making Drake's world are high. Anything could happen within the type of world that we've created.

Was it a conscious decision to shorten the length of the experience this time around?

Well as far as our playthroughs show it's about the same length as *Uncharted 2*. It depends on the player of course. So no, we didn't make a conscious attempt to make this a shorter game, at least not to my knowledge. I work alongside my fellow co-lead Jacob Minkoff and we're in a lot of the conversations that are had by Justin Richmond, our game director, and Amy Hennig, our creative director and head writer. Maybe those guys had some discussions about making it longer or shorter but we sort of like the eight to 12-hour range that our game is in. If you hurry you can beat it quicker. Most players I think take about ten hours to beat *Uncharted 2* or *Uncharted 3*.

"There's a whole bunch of pubs in the East End of London that I became fascinated with and there are elements of them in the game's pub"

It took us a bit longer actually...

I find that players who are really kind of relishing the experience and who love the world of *Uncharted* do generally take a bit longer because they kind of metaphorically stop to smell the roses and take in those big views that we put so much effort into creating. But some people do just run through fast. I always love it when I see a player kind of pause and take a moment and look out at the horizon.

The opening pub level is surprisingly authentic. How much research did you do into that?

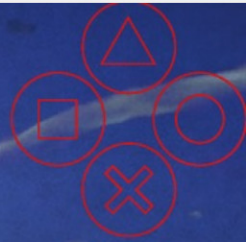
I'm from England so I started going to the pub when I was 18 and I've spent a fair bit of time in pubs. I'm really happy to hear you say that it felt authentic because, of course, I was working with a team of artists and designers and animators from all around the world, many of them American. As an English person I knew that if there was one detail out of place I would never hear the end of it from my English mates. And in actual fact, I noticed right before we hit our beta deadline that the electrical power outlets were upside down in the game because I hadn't told the guys which way up they go. I actually fixed it – I got in and rotated them in our 3D modelling software, Maya, because I cared so much about getting it right.

Is it modelled on a specific pub?

We did lots of research, gathered lots of photo reference and there's one particular pub in the East End of London that I became fascinated with. Actually there's a whole bunch of pubs in the East End of London that I became fascinated with and there are elements of them in the game's pub. But we created a pub from scratch using concept art and we worked with a very talented concept artist called Andrew Kim who made all these beautiful drawings for us, not just to get the props and the textures right but also the kind of mood and the lighting in the place.

The first game had weird mutants, the second had blue people dressing up. This one's got hallucinations. Was that designed to make those enemies more believable by nudging them into the realm of the supernatural?

We think that rather than trying to explain things too much it's better if we leave some room for ambiguity and for interpretation on the part of our players. When you're storytelling, even something simple like when two people are having a conversation and you show on their faces how they're feeling, we all have our own preconceptions about what a particular kind of smile or a particular kind of gesture means or what it means when you say something in a certain tone of voice. I think that's part of the power of the medium, that it is open to interpretation by us and so it becomes much more powerful as a result, because it becomes personal. It's the same kind of



thing with the weird elements in *Uncharted*. We try and leave that same room for our audience to find their own way of understanding it and we just hope that that helps to make the experience much richer as a result.

Playing as young Drake is one of the early standout moments of the game. What inspired the team to do that and what were the challenges involved?

We like to play around with time. It is one of our storytelling techniques. In *Uncharted 2*, for instance, we started halfway through the story with Drake hanging off of a train car, which in turn is hanging off the edge of a cliff, and he has to clamber up to safety. And then we actually flash back, you know, some number of weeks to the real beginning of the story which is Drake getting involved in this heist. And it's something that we've wanted to do since *Uncharted: Drake's Fortune*, in fact. There was one stage of *Drake's Fortune* where we were planning to do a similar thing but for various reasons we decided not to. So we put it on hold and used it in *Uncharted 2*. And I guess the sequence they're talking about in *Uncharted 3* is a similar thing, you know, it's a flashback, it gives us an opportunity to show these characters in a different time and place and to hopefully bring some depth to our audiences' understanding of who these two people are.

How much of *Uncharted 3* was planned going right back to the development of the original version?

The way that we develop the stories of the games is quite different to the way people think we develop them. Making a game is fundamentally different from making a film. In a film you start with the script and so everything is already decided: the screenwriter has already made all the most important decisions about what's going to happen in the story. In the *Uncharted* games we have some brainstorming at the beginning of the project and we come up with ideas for gameplay, for technology and for story. And then we just start to work on some of those ideas. And it becomes a process of finding which are the biggest and best ideas that we really want to keep. It's almost a process of elimination, some of the things we try don't work out. Happily most of them have worked out well. And then having decided on maybe half a dozen or more major things we start to try and find the connective tissue that makes them fit together. It's a very organic process and it's really, really difficult. Amy Hennig, our creative director, burns a lot of midnight oil figuring out the themes that she has in mind for the story, usually from fairly close to the beginning >

25 million

Crash Team Racing
(4.79 million)

23 million

22 million

20 million

18 million

Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped
(7.12 million)

16 million

14 million

12 million

Crash Bandicoot 2:
Cortex Strikes Back
(7.57 million)

10 million

8 million

Jak X: Combat Racing (0.47 million)

6 million

Jak 3 (1.75 million)

4 million

Crash Bandicoot
(6.80 million)

Jak II (2.30 million)

2 million

Jak and Daxter:
The Precursor Legacy
(3.12 million)

Uncharted 3:
Drake's Deception
(1.53 million)

Uncharted 2:
Among Thieves
(4.97 million)

Uncharted:
Drake's Fortune
(3.78 million)

(Sales figures courtesy of VGChartz.com)

CRASH

JAK AND DAXTER

UNCHARTED



UNCHARTED

DRAKE'S FORTUNE

THE MOVIE

WITH A DIRECTOR announced and a 2013 date pencilled in, work on the film version of *Uncharted* is continuing. Called *Uncharted: Drake's Fortune*, the movie is being developed by Sony Pictures and Richard Lemarchand believes they have the right man in Neil Berger, who directed *Limitless*, a film starring Anna Friel and Bradley Cooper.

"We're all very excited about him being involved because he's a great filmmaker and he really seems to get *Uncharted*," Lemarchand says. "He's also a fan of the games and we're sure it's in very safe hands with him."

Naughty Dog is involved with the film to some degree. "Some of the senior people at Naughty Dog have meetings with the producers of the film," Lemarchand adds. "We're not really directly involved but the producers are very keen to make sure that we're happy with the direction that they take, which is great for us because it means that we can then trust them to do a wonderful job, which we do."



> [of development]. But it's something that I really like about development. It means that rather than spending two years just executing a vision, it's kind of an exploration of a space of gameplay and a story and it makes it very exciting and interesting all the way through the process.

Did *Uncharted 2*'s shadow loom over *Uncharted 3*'s development?

Definitely, we felt the pressure to outdo ourselves. I think most of the pressure came from us: we dream pretty big and even though we were blown away by the warmth of the reception that *Uncharted 2* got, we were nowhere near done with what we wanted to accomplish. The people at Naughty Dog are really prepared to go the extra mile to do something that I think some would have written off as impossible to do. The cruise ship is a great example. My co-lead game designer Jacob Minkoff had a meeting about the idea with a group of programmers and animators. They looked at him like he was mad when he said, "I want to put Drake

in a ship that's going to be on a dynamic sea. It's going to start to capsize part way through, water's going to flood into the inside of it." It just sounds like a nightmare of interdependent dynamics systems and you can imagine

all of the bugs that would and did have to be fixed. But it's a great tribute to everyone who was in that meeting that they chatted about it for 20 minutes. They identified the big issues that they would have to deal with and then they came back and said, 'let's do it'.

The ending of *Uncharted 3* leaves it a lot more open than people are maybe expecting. Was it ever intended to be a final entry to the series?

We're famously on record as saying that we'll keep making *Uncharted* games for as long as people want to keep playing them. And for as long as we've got new ideas for the games we will. We're very keen not to repeat ourselves. We work very hard to come up with fresh ideas and put those ideas together in new ways.

What level of involvement do you have with the PlayStation Vita version?

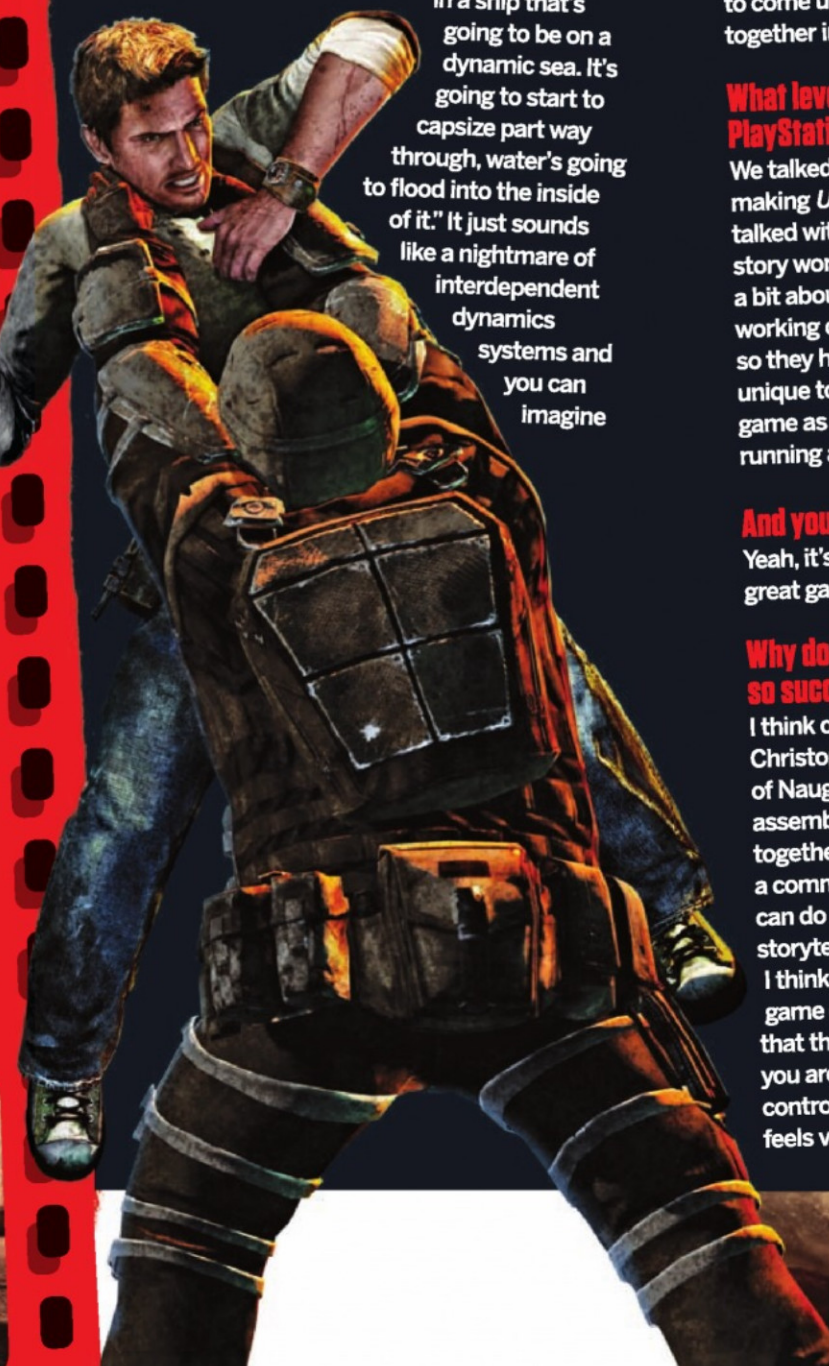
We talked to the guys at Sony Bend, who are making *Uncharted: The Golden Abyss*. Amy talked with them a lot to help dial them into the story world of *Uncharted* and we talked to them a bit about the game mechanics of it. But they're working on this unique amazing piece of hardware, so they have game design opportunities that are unique to the Vita. And so yeah, we get to play the game as it's being developed but they are up and running and doing a great job with it at their studio.

And you're happy with that game?

Yeah, it's very much an *Uncharted* game. It's a really great game, yeah.

Why do you think the series has been so successful?

I think one of them is that Evan Wells and Christophe Balestra, who are the co-presidents of Naughty Dog, have done an amazing job of assembling a team of people who work really well together, who are very talented and who share a common vision for action videogames that can do a better job of creating a cinematic storytelling experience that is truly playable. I think that it's been a dream for a lot of us game developers and players for a long time that there would be an action game where you are nearly always in moment-to-moment control of the player character and where he feels very on the button, which is a phrase we





use to describe the kind of instantaneous control over the character. So as soon as you make an input the character does the action that you're trying to perform. And putting that together with great evocative camera moves and terrific animation and a well-realised environment rich with visual text and the lighting and sound to create a kind of complete interactive cinematic experience.

The writing must play a major part...

Of course. I think the other big part of the success of the series is the wonderful writing and the work of our amazing actors. We're kind of unique in the way that we put the performances together and we cast very carefully, we workshop the scenes with our actors to get their creative input. Amy will often choose lines that the actors come up with on the spur of the moment over things that she's written herself, just because they work even better than what she'd already created. And she's very humble in that way, but she has the courage and the willingness to do that. I think it's also one of the things that makes her really talented, there's no ego involved – she's always just concerned about making the story as good as it can possibly be. And then we get the actors to perform together on emotion capture stage so they can really play off each other. And I think that all of that adds up to performances in the game, which are extremely emotionally rich. And that's something that all of us as human beings respond to. So yeah, it's an honour to get to work on the *Uncharted* series. It feels like an incredible opportunity to work with a team that is the complete package.

"Think that all of that adds up to performances in the game, which are extremely emotionally rich. And that's something that all of us as human beings respond to"

NAUGHTY DOG'S THREE BIG OPTIONS

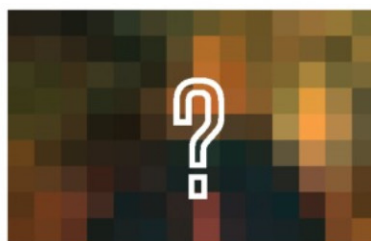
OPTION A: *Uncharted 4*

POSSIBLE BUT DEPENDS on Sony's plans for PS3. Traditionally developers tend not to launch new IP late in a console's life for various reasons – they'll have a new IP already built up (in this case *Uncharted*), having a new console complicates things for a sequel and opens possibilities that the new series might not allow them and gamers start withholding money when a new console is on the horizon. So *Uncharted 4* will probably depend on Sony's plans as much as anything else.



OPTION B: *New Game Licence*

NAUGHTY DOG WORK to three. After *Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped*, Traveller's Tales took over. That saw out the original PlayStation's life span for Naughty Dog. The studio then created the *Jak And Daxter* series, which lasted three games (plus a racing spin-off) before turning to *Uncharted*. This saw out the life of PS2. Now *Uncharted 3* has been released, again, it raises the question of whether Naughty Dog has now seen out the life of PlayStation 3 with Nathan Drake and wants to try something new.



OPTION C: *New Jak Title*

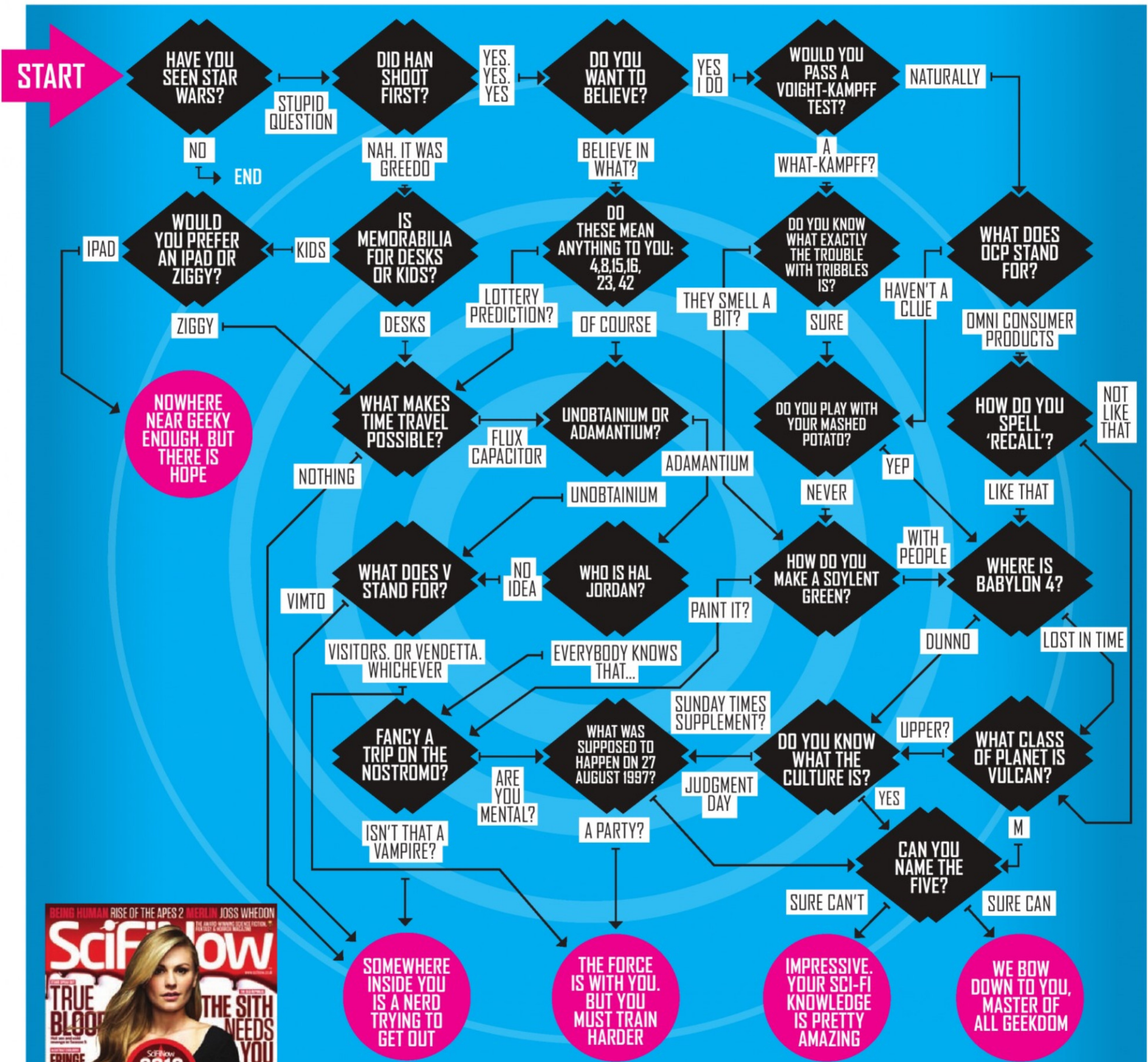
MORE OF A fan request than anything else, as this doesn't necessarily fit in with Sony's drive for adult, grittier IP that supposedly reshaped the original *Uncharted* from a fantasy game into the shooter it is known as today.

It's unlikely Naughty Dog will revisit *Jak* but with the *Crash Bandicoot* licence elsewhere, there's a much higher chance of seeing a new *Jak* adventure. The upcoming HD collection helps throw weight behind *Jak's* return.



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PLAY MAG **Preview** 点検

Playing bad games so you don't have to

Including: DmC fights back /// Rainbow Six Patriots gets serious /// Escape Plan is Vita's prettiest game thus far



50 DmC

Exclusive screens and an interview

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Men punching men. POW!

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And its first ever Uncharted title!

71 LITTLE DEVIANTS PSV

And its first mini-game collection

71 MODNATION RAGERS: ROAD TRIP PSV

Create, upload, race, crash, sulk

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Monochrome, thinky, fun

74 MOTORSTORM RC PSV

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The FPS we probably don't need

75 TOUCH MY KATAMARI PSV

That's a game, not a threat

76 SUPER STARDUST DELTA PSV

PSN smash slides over to Vita

77 REALITY FIGHTERS PSV

Top game? Wasted tech demo?



54 Ninja Gaiden 3 PS3

"A new level of violence" apparently



56 UFC Undisputed 3 PS3

Foot-in-mouth: The Videogame



58 Rainbow Six Patriots PS3

Up above the streets and houses

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PREVIEW

The games that will shape the future of PlayStation

White on

Return of the king

Bound to please all those *DmC* fans that wah'd themselves into oblivion when the 'new' Dante was revealed, this special form seems to give the appearance of the infamous demon hunter in his later incarnations. Does it matter? More than you'd imagine to a lot of people, most of which would no doubt storm Ninja Theory's Cambridge HQ if they could ever leave their Command Centres Of Internet Doom.

We still don't know exactly what abilities this mode will entail, but we're confident that a) it'll look spectacular, and b) everything around Dante is going to be killed... to the max by the end of it.

Big boss man

Massively grotesque bosses? All in a day's work

Look at that thing on page 53. What is it? A snail? A penis? A Penail? Seriously, we need to know, for when we have to tell our mental health practitioners exactly what we're seeing in our nightmares.

Seriously, though, this thing just shows how eager Ninja Theory is to change up the tried and tested *DmC* bad guys. Granted, it's done it in an absolutely disgusting way but hopefully this enemy's size points to the use of different fighting strategies to bring it down: if we have to simply hack-and-slash it until it dies we'll be disappointed. Ninja Theory is an inventive developer with a great grasp of scale: let's hope it puts its skills to good use here.

RELEASE DATE: TBC 2012

DmC

It'll be all white on the night



Remember when this used to be the laughing stock of the games industry? Us too. As we get nearer to the release date, however, it seems more and more likely that it actually might be quite good, no doubt infuriating all those fanboys who got their Dante pyjamas in a twist.

At the very least Ninja Theory has poured effort into making the enemies and environments as diverse as possible. The developer has proven with *Enslaved* that it can craft characters that are far more interesting than the usual dross that

populates shelves, so there's hope in that regard as well. Still, Dante circa Ninja-Theory-in-2011 just looks sad... and yet, what is this we see in one of the shots? Dante with his traditional white hair? Given that said model seems to appear as a powered-up version of Dante, we've decided to label this power 'fanboy mode'.

All joking aside, if this has half the characterisation of *Enslaved* and quarter the combat appeal of *DMC 3* then it'll be a fantastic game.

Ninja Theory has development duties for *DmC*. For more details check out www.ninjatheory.com

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?



White hair.



Weird bosses.



Big combos.



Twin pistols.

READ ME

DmC will be Ninja Theory's fourth game, after *Kung Fu Chaos*, *Heavenly Sword* and *Enslaved*. It'll have to be the worst game ever to sell less than those last two.

Fight club

Which style will you choose?

One of the key components of the excellent *Devil May Cry 3*'s phenomenal critical success was the ability to choose your own fighting style from certain presets and let that define your actions from there. After all, who could forget the swinging blades of the Swordmaster style, or the counter-heavy Royal Guard? Or were you simply a Gunslinger or an all-round Trickster? Each class had its own benefits, advantages and weak points, and we can't wait to see what combat solutions Ninja, famed for its work on fellow hack-and-slasher *Heavenly Sword*, comes up with.

Separation anxiety

We're not in Kansas any more

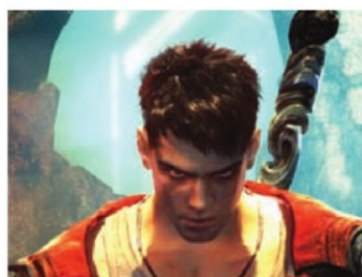
Dante may look like the baddest mo fo on the block, but he's not the one wielding the chainsaw. *Devil May Cry* games have always prided themselves on not only inventive character designs but also on the combo system that gracefully enables you to take your enemies apart. Although the traditional ranking system used by Capcom for various levels of technical ability is distinctly Japanese (S ranks and so on) we'd hate for Ninja Theory to drop them from this new take to distance itself. We doubt this will happen: instead, we're betting on a hybrid of the old mechanic and something completely new.



Environ-mental

It's not just the demons that are out to get you

DmC retains its forbears' heavy Gothic vibe, but the demons that inhabit this world aren't the only foes to stand in Dante's way. The environment itself will pose a massive threat, shifting and changing to obstruct the young demon hunter's mission. We've already seen an example of this where Dante has to escape a cathedral that is rapidly collapsing around him, and we wouldn't be surprised if the wealth of what appear to be CCTV cameras have no small part to play in proceedings. Ninja Theory is a British company after all, and we all know how much Brits hate those things.



DOUBLE VISION

So that's where they got the idea from...

WHEN THE NEW-LOOK Dante was revealed – with his stupid emo barnet – many internet blather mouths sobbed, 'Why? Where is Dante's lovely white hair?'

We can't answer that question for sure, but here's a picture of Dante, and if you turn the page to our interview with Ninja Theory chief Tameem Antoniades you'll see where some inspiration might have come from...

I'D ASK EVERYONE TO BE PATIENT, WE'VE GOT A LOT MORE TO SHOW...



TAMEEM ANTONIADES
Chief of design

Ninja Theory's last game *Enslaved: Odyssey To The West* was a well-received commercial failure. **Play** sat down with design chief Tameem Antoniades to talk about past failures, future glories, working with Capcom and taking on the internet haters

There has been plenty of critical feedback from the media and fans on *Heavenly Sword* and *Enslaved*, both good and bad. What lessons from those games are you taking into *DmC*?

With every game we make we learn a huge amount. What we learnt from creating *Heavenly Sword* we took into *Enslaved* and what we learnt from *Enslaved* we're taking into *DmC*. There are countless experiences that you gain through the course of developing a game. It's natural that when you come across a familiar design scenario in a project you look back at what did and didn't go well for you the last time around, building on your experiences to make a better game each time.

How open has Capcom been to your design philosophy? Have there been any ideas which Capcom hasn't agreed to?

We work incredibly closely and openly with Capcom. We talk to each other on a daily basis either over the phone or on email. We also meet face-to-face at least once a month to discuss the smallest of details,

with either our team travelling out to Japan or Capcom visiting us in Cambridge. So in that respect, Capcom certainly aren't scared to tell us if they feel something isn't quite right. But, if anything, I think that is a good indication of just how strong our relationship is.

As a team we have a very clear direction for *DmC* that we're all confident in

Which of the previous games in the series influenced you the most?

Rather than the games themselves, I'd actually say that the most powerful influence has come from the Capcom team that made those games. In particular, we work very closely with Hideaki Itsuno, director of *Devil May Cry 2, 3* and *4*, who has just about more *Devil May Cry* knowledge and development experience than anyone else. It's fantastic to work with someone who knows the series to such a depth, particularly when analysing some of the small, yet crucially important, details.

From all the reverence from fans that the series boasts, only the original and *Devil May Cry 3* have really stood out as exceptional games. We presume Ninja Theory has revisited earlier games in the *Devil May Cry* series – what do you think it was that *Devil May Cry 1* and *3* really got right that clicked with fans?

When *Devil May Cry* was first released it did something unique by combining the story, puzzles and environments of an action

game with the technical combat of a fighting game. It was also one of the first times that players had to think not just about killing enemies but also how stylishly they were killing them. This combination of technical depth and stylish combat offered something new that gamers really liked. This gameplay formula has remained throughout the series, which I think has been the foundation of its success and popularity.

Ninja Theory's output traditionally leans towards

accessibility while *Devil May Cry* has been seen as a challenging, difficult game to complete. Which way does *DmC* lean?

We want a game that is balanced so that whether you're new to *Devil May Cry*, have put hundreds of hours into the series, or sit somewhere in the middle, you can enjoy the experience and find the level of challenge and complexity that is right for you.

Everyone remembers the internet over-reaction to the redesign of Dante. When something like that happens, how much attention do you pay to it?

As a team, together with Capcom, we have a very clear direction for *DmC* that we're all confident in. Everyone working on this project, including our partners at Capcom Japan, are focused on the same goals. I'd ask everyone to keep an open mind about *DmC* and to be patient. We've got a lot more of the game to show; a lot that I think is going to excite existing fans and those new to the series.

Lastly: sword or gun?

Surely it has to be both! ☒



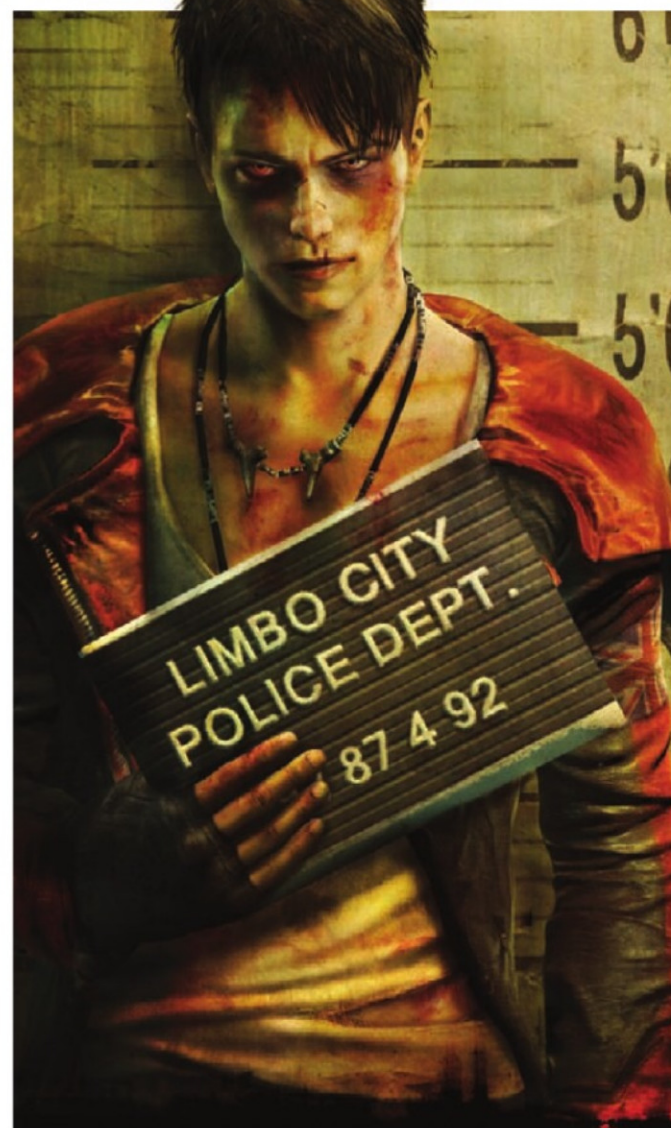
Just quietly, is that bad guy behind Dante wielding a Lightsaber? Better call George.



Strictly Come Dancing took a turn for the violent when Dante was voted out.



We're not going to lie: that guy with the chainsaw should really be winning this fight.



PREVIEW



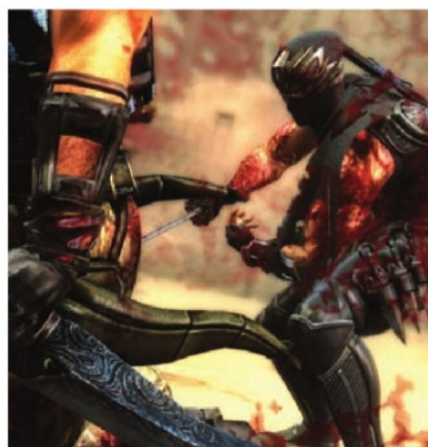
● Eastern dragon design vs *Skyrim*'s Western dragon design: interesting.



● Setting your hand on fire isn't cool, kids.



● Will the maturity of *Ninja Gaiden 3* go beyond gallons of claret?



● We're not sure what this is, but it's probably difficult to beat.

DUAL NINJA ACTION

Multiplayer to have 'more focus'

NINJA GAIDEN 3 will have an expanded multiplayer element over *Sigma 2*. As Hayashi tells us: "In the co-op mode we have a vast variety of difficulties to choose from. The Vs mode is more focused on the ease of picking up and playing the game. At the same time the mode has a lot of depth."

It won't take much to have more depth than the last game's MP element, but it's nice to hear Team Ninja is putting some effort into quite an overlooked aspect of the series. Though, naturally, the focus remains with single-player.

RELEASE DATE: TBC 2012

Ninja Gaiden 3

Game director Yosuke Hayashi talks about moving your heart (with a sword)

PS3

For the first time on PS3 we won't have to wait for a *Ninja Gaiden* game to make the jump from Xbox 360 to our beloved Sony console. We won't have to deal with some nice, but ultimately forgettable extras to make up for the wait. We won't have to call it 'Sigma' for some reason. Yes, we'll be getting the third entry to the reboot of the classic series at the same time as the others.

But that's not the only first – this is the first title from the modern *Ninja Gaiden* games without Tomonobu Itagaki at the helm. Everyone's asked the game's director, Yosuke Hayashi, what that means for *Ninja Gaiden 3* – and it doesn't look like that question is going to go away: "I have been asked this countless times. The biggest change that I felt when he left stems from the very negative connotation that everyone started to doubt whether the remaining team members had the potential to make decent games." Hayashi went on: "If I was asked about this right now I would not feel negative at all. We will be releasing *Ninja Gaiden 3* very soon and you will see the answer for yourself."

Fortunately there hasn't been outside pressure to tone *Ninja Gaiden 3*'s difficulty down in any

way – but that's not to say it has stayed exactly the same: "We figured that if we keep the series as difficult as up to now there would be no future for *Ninja Gaiden*. That is why we needed to drop the 'really hard action game' pronoun associated with the *Ninja Gaiden* series and take a new approach with *Ninja Gaiden 3*. However, as we respect our fans we have left the challenge for them as well."

So will this be the *Ninja Gaiden* – difficulty and all – that we all know and love? "What we have done for *Ninja Gaiden 3* is keep the challenging nature of the game for our hardcore fans and added another 'approach' to new and more casual players," Hayashi explained. "This is simply not just a different difficulty level but rather a 'play style' as we are calling it. In the 'Ninja' play style the game will offer much more challenge. If you choose the 'Hero' play style you will get guard and evade support when you are low on health."

Ninja Gaiden 3 will feature Move controls. Wagging your waggystick in front of the TV to simulate sword strikes sounds like a decent way to use the controller, to be fair, but what should players expect? Hayashi has an answer: "I think that players who pick up the Move

controller and associate it with a katana will intuitively simulate the movements of the katana with this controller. We imagined this from the start and this is the way we realised this compatibility." But surely this is a series requiring split-second timing and complex pad interaction? Don't worry – you're covered: "As this game requires precise button input to play, the motion control is a bit difficult to use in this case, we purposely matched the Move controls with the 'Hero' play style."

And how else has the game changed – have reviews and player feedback been taken into

Ninja Gaiden 3 sees the removal of what many might think a minor visual element, dismemberment. But Hayashi sees it as going deeper than that: "The reason was that we saw the limit in dismemberment. In the previous game you could cut off four parts of your enemy's body... So the question then is should we have increased this to ten parts for *Ninja Gaiden 3*? Or should we have made the dismemberment expressions more realistic instead? As you can see we didn't see any future potential with this approach. We felt the limits in these expressions of violence and thought that it would be better to take a

"In the previous game, you could cut off four parts of your enemy's body. Should we have increased this to ten parts?"

account? "We have watched and read through many reviews. And we are fixing and improving bits and pieces and making the good parts even better," Hayashi continued. "What we really need to do as developers is make something that exceeds players' expectations and imagination. For this reason, when we started development on *Ninja Gaiden 3* we did not focus too much on review feedback."

different approach and show a new level of violence."

And what is this 'new level'? It may surprise you: "What we aimed for was not visual violence, but more along the lines of violence that reaches and moves people. This is not violence that is just a visual stimulation, but moreover we aimed for violence which can move people's hearts through the controller."

We will have to wait and see if *Ninja Gaiden 3* really can move our hearts – but even if it doesn't, at least we have a rock-hard ninja game to fall back on.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Keeps the difficulty and therefore keeps the fans happy.
- Adds a lower difficulty and therefore brings in new fans.
- It's Team Ninja's chance to move out of Tomonobu Itagaki's shadow.
- There haven't been enough ninjas in videogames recently.

READ ME

Hayashi said once, of Team Ninja's proclivity for busty ladies in its games: "Every man really loves tits." He didn't say it to us, though, unfortunately.

Ninja Gaiden 3 is being developed by Team Ninja. Check out <http://teamninja-studio.com/ng3/us/> for more details.



RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY

UFC Undisputed 3

Rock you like a hurricane

● Chuck Liddell here, doing what he does best: punching people's brains into comas.

PS3

How refreshing it is when a yearly sports game publisher decides to not think with its wallet. Recognising that the last *UFC* game, *Undisputed 2010*, hadn't done nearly the amount of gangbusting sales the 2009 iteration had, THQ had two choices.

The first would be to do what it did to *SmackDown* and run it into the ground with a schedule so punishing that the programmers' families have probably declared them legally dead.

Option two was to rotate the game onto an 18-month cycle and actually improve on what was already a fantastic title, and almost unbelievably THQ went for the latter. The result is that *UFC* looks to be another fine entry into a great series, but even with the extended dev time there are still a few concerns.

Still, the good news first: new additions are both casual-orientated and fan friendly, aiming to balance out the game's systems to make it more accessible while also adding value for those that love the sport.

From a mechanical standpoint, probably the most obvious change is the move away from shining the analogue stick to pull off or

prevent submissions. This method was genuinely shite, ruining both your palms and your pads. Now you have a mini Octagon pop up on screen: players have to try to move their colour-coded UI over or away from the other player's to successfully submit or escape their opponent, respectively. It's a little odd to look at, but in practice the system is far more intuitive and enjoyable to use than the shine.

Other new features will please both newcomers and veterans alike. The previous games' quarter/half-circle ground transitions are still there, but if you want to make things slightly easier then a new option enables players to simply flick up or down on the stick to perform the transition. With *EA MMA*'s simple transition system making *UFC Undisputed*'s seem frustrating and overly technical this is a welcome move, as is the new mode that pits fighters with equalised stats.

Now, players can tee off against each other without one having a definitive advantage in terms of their fighter's make-up, ensuring the game is all about strategy and skill and not just about who can race over and pick Anderson Silva or Jon Jones first on the fighter select screen.

These changes aside there's a host of new tweaks and additions to make *UFC 3* stand out from its predecessor. Some are small, like fighter walk-ins (finally) but some change the way the whole game is played. The most dramatic change comes in the form of the addition of the Pride Fighting Championship rule set. Pride was the biggest MMA organisation in the world around the turn of the millennium, and a whole host of current UFC stars (including Rampage Jackson, Wanderlei Silva and Shogun Rua) made their names here. Oh, and it was far more brutal than the current UFC rule book would dare of being.

Case in point: soccer kicking. The UFC playbook holds no place for kicking downed opponents in the head, let alone running up and thwacking their bonces like you're Alan Shearer taking a penalty against Sunderland. Pride, however, has no such issue, and neither does it have any with stamping on downed opponents' faces or making the first round take place over ten minutes, double the amount of time they usually do. Oh well.

The addition of Pride's way of doing things may be brutal, but it is a game-changer: the lack of a

cage – Pride fights take place in a ring – only makes things even more different. Casual fans might not understand what all the fuss is about, but long-time MMA veterans are going to love putting their heroes against each other in dream match-ups that never actually happened.

With the outside of the cage presentation being absolutely top-notch, we'd like Yuke's to have a good look at the animation system, which is looking worryingly dated and massively robotic. Previous games also had this problem, but could slide by on the virtue that this was in a world where the world-beating animation system of *EA MMA* didn't exist. So with *UFC 3* not even looking to be a substantial improvement on its own predecessor, let alone *EA MMA*, constitutes a sizeable flaw: there's nothing more likely to take you out of the experience than seeing two fighters going at it with the fluidity of *Rock'em Sock'em Robots*.

It's an area that needs addressing if the series is to regain the throne it lost to EA's sadly discontinued competitor, and we're worried that without *EA MMA* at its heels Yuke's might be tempted to rest on its laurels. We hope not, we'll be disappointed if it makes it to shelves with the same stiff movements. This still has a way to go to better a game that will sadly never see a sequel.

UFC Undisputed 3 is being developed by Yuke's Osaka. Visit www.ufcundisputed.com for details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Brutal KOs.
- The addition of Pride rules.
- Revised ground game.
- Getting to knock Chael Sonnen the eff out.

READ ME

One area of *UFC 3* that we're not worried about in the slightest is the commentary, which, if it's half as good as 2010's, will be among the finest sports game chat ever recorded.



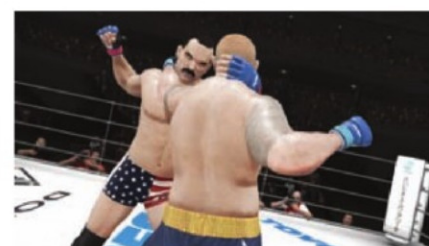
ULTIMATE KNOCKOUTS

Legendary fighters make welcome return to roster

FAN SERVICE IS one of the cornerstones of all sports packages, and *UFC 3* is no different, introducing a wealth of playable legends for you to get all nostalgic over. Here's a selection you might enjoy...



Here's Carlos Newton, who described his fighting style as Dragon Ball Jiu Jitsu. Right. Anyway, Carlos also holds the distinction of losing his Welterweight title by choking out an opponent. What? Check out Newton vs Hughes on YouTube to see what we mean.



Ah, Don Frye. One of the old guard of MMA, his tactics were simple but effective: grab a guy in a hockey clinch and punch him with your free arm until one of you fell over/died. It was a simpler time.



And here's Mirko 'Cro Cop' Filipovic: MMA fighter and former member of Croatia's special forces police unit and, um, parliament. He likes kicking things, as you can probably tell from this sample quote from the man himself:

"Right leg hospital, left leg cemetery."

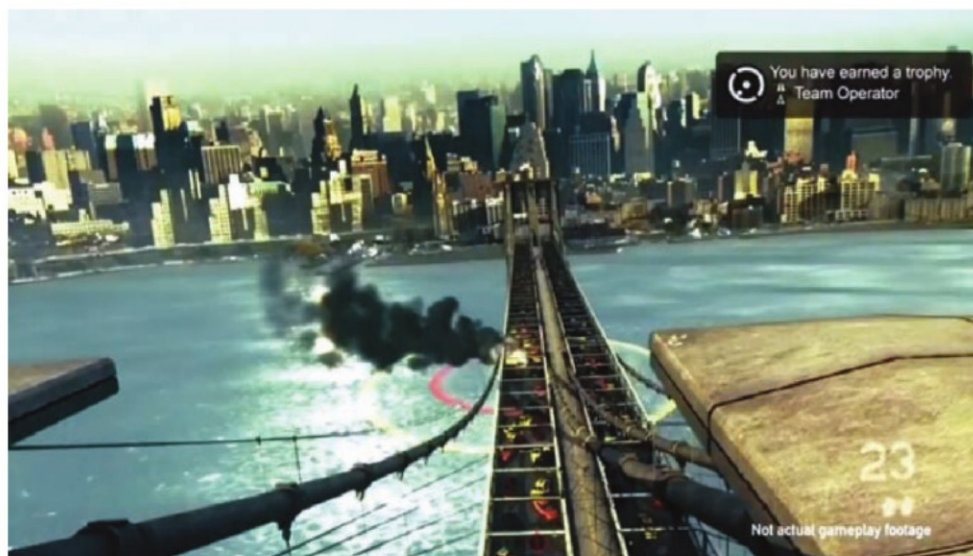
PREVIEW



Not actual gameplay footage



RELEASE DATE: 2013



You have earned a trophy
Team Operator

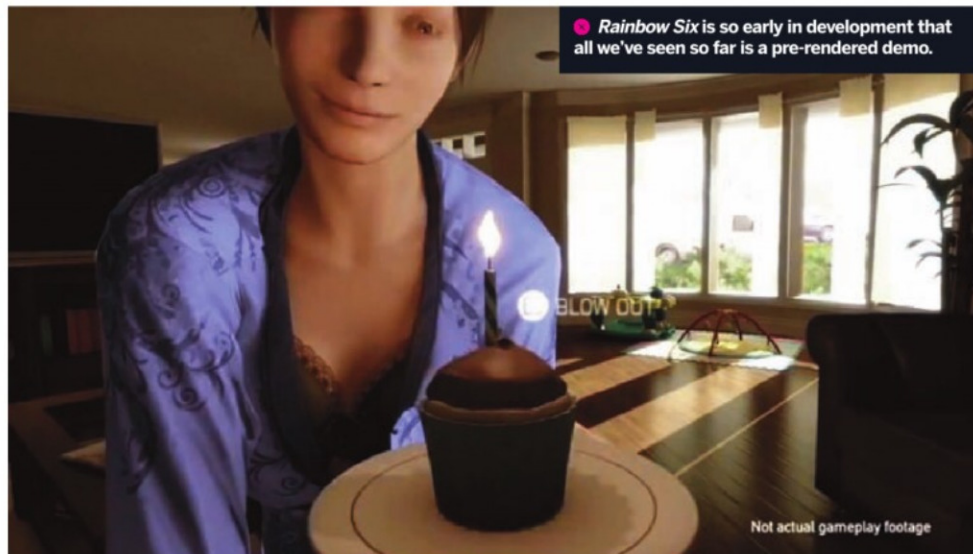
Not actual gameplay footage

There'll be a number of Jack Bauer-esque moral choices to make throughout the game.



Not actual gameplay footage

Rainbow Six is so early in development that all we've seen so far is a pre-rendered demo.



Not actual gameplay footage

Rainbow Six Patriots

No, they're not the La Li Lu Le Lo

PS3

You're standing on a heavily populated bridge that stretches off into Manhattan during rush hour. It's packed with cars, taxis, trucks and coaches full of civilians, screaming in fear as they try to escape the man currently stood in front of you. Attached to his chest is a bomb, ready to go off if he lessens his grip on the trigger clutched tightly in his hand. If he does so the kill radius of 50 metres could kill over 100 people, a read-out informs you on your HUD.

Your fellow Rainbow Operative assures the man that the bomb squad will be there soon as he becomes visibly more alarmed, his voice shaking as he professes his desire not to die and the fear for his captive wife and child.

But then the sound of a mobile ring tone spells disaster, and a timer on screen indicates that a remote trigger has set the bomb to detonate in 30 seconds. The bridge is still crammed with civilians. The bomb squad is too far out. The text 'Eliminate Threat' hovers next to the innocent man, accompanied by a button prompt. In true Jack Bauer style you save the day in the least heroic way possible, throwing the man over the side of the bridge while he screams for his life, before the following explosion cuts the shriek short.

It's not the kind of sequence you would usually expect from *Rainbow Six*, a series that before now has been more squarely focused on strategically breaching rooms and tightly co-ordinated teamwork rather than split-second life or death decision-making. But in *Rainbow Six Patriots* Ubisoft wants to get to the very core of what makes the books such an entertaining read – the humanity behind the counter-terrorist unit's tactics.

In a world where terrorism has evolved into something altogether more aggressive and determined in its goals, Rainbow has had to evolve, too, and the game will see you attempt to navigate some incredibly murky ethical greys. Just as in the novel, the team in *Patriots* will do anything to get their man, and that might mean innocent bystanders could be harmed or killed or you might need to take a shot even after your target has surrendered.

The threat this time are the 'True Patriots', a highly trained, well-organised homegrown revolutionary group that claim the American government has become irrevocably corrupted corporations and politicians. It's your job to stop them.

Characterisation has been a big point of focus for Ubisoft, with the team looking to achieve "fundamental humanity and

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Grey moral choices make you feel like Jack Bauer.
- There's a greater narrative focus alongside the strategic action.
- Co-operative play returns.
- Being a tough-as-nails Rainbow operative is always fun.



Not actual gameplay footage

realisation" of their characters. Playing from multiple perspectives will allow Ubisoft to craft a more intriguing narrative path throughout the game – the gameplay demonstration shown so far begins with the player in the role of the man with the bomb, his lazy birthday morning interrupted by terrorists who force him to strap on the explosive by threatening the life of his wife and child.

If this is all sounding a bit too *Call Of Duty* for you, then your fears aren't completely unfounded. It can't be denied that *Rainbow Six's* new narrative and character-heavy direction feels somewhat removed from the tactical play that defined the game in the past. But *Rainbow Six Patriots* isn't abandoning its roots entirely. This isn't just a game of 'follow Captain Price'; team play, tactics and co-ordination will all still play a big part, and Ubisoft promises a huge variety of new innovative co-op and multiplayer experiences, with players rewarded for mastering new, but as yet unannounced, features that enhance communication and tactical execution between team-mates.

But if Ubisoft truly wants to differentiate its experience from *Call Of Duty*, it won't be in just creating gameplay focused around teamwork and strategy. It will be in making the player think about their actions before they pull the trigger, and that's something very few, if any, FPS devs have ever pulled off. A tactical co-op shooter that's also emotionally affecting? It's a tough concept, but if anyone's got the resources to pull it off, it's Ubisoft Montreal.

Rainbow Six Patriots is being developed by Ubisoft Montreal. For more info visit rainbow6.ubi.com/patriots/en-GB/

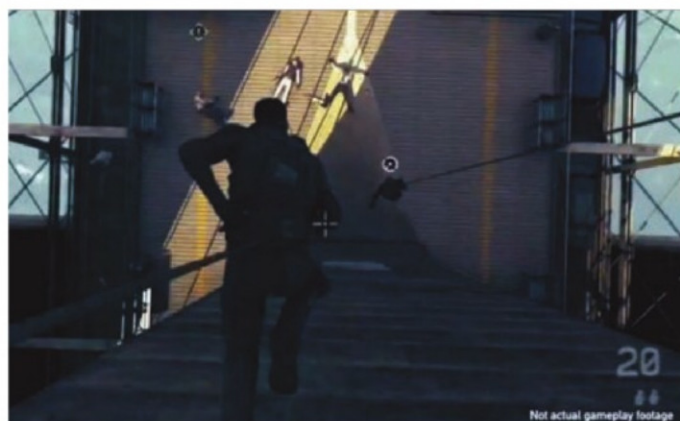
READ ME

Rainbow Six Patriots takes the series in a new narrative-focused direction, with grey moral choices forcing you to pick between the lesser of two evils throughout.



Some aspects of *Rainbow Six Patriots* feel a bit 'Call Of Duty'.

Not actual gameplay footage



Not actual gameplay footage



Not actual gameplay footage



The narrative in *Rainbow Six Patriots* looks set to be played out from multiple perspectives.

I LIKE TO MOVE IT, MOVE IT

How Ubisoft is utilising animation to further humanise its characters

IN ITS QUEST to stay as true to the novels as possible Ubisoft Montreal is also greatly focusing on animation, and emphasising your relationship with the environment. According to the developer the *Rainbow* characters in the original novel were extremely physical, moving with a wolf-like grace and aggression. It's this expert proficiency that Ubisoft hopes to communicate in the game, not just in how the characters use weapons or throw grenades, but in the way they move through the environment. Run up to a wall and your character will slam up against it, for example, while sliding up past an open car door will see your character reach out and shut it in order to get past.



Not actual gameplay footage

PREVIEW



RELEASE DATE: 9 MARCH

Street Fighter X Tekken

For the last time, the X means 'cross'

PS3 There's no sign of Jack in the latest build of *Street Fighter X Tekken* we've been playing. This annoys some people, though not many. Anyway, we've put some good time into the game now and it's still revealing itself as a confusing, but enjoyable mishmash of styles. There's more *Tekken* in the game than we expected – counters, juggling and so on – but this is still resolutely a *Street Fighter* game.

It's also pleasing to find there's only a semi-serious attitude behind the whole thing (at best). If *Street Fighter X Tekken* was positioning itself as The Next Big Thing in tournament brawlers it might fall a bit flat – as it is, it's been raising a fair few smiles and looks like it could be a nice, fairly simple alternative to the various hardcore fighting games on PlayStation 3.

Street Fighter X Tekken is being developed by Capcom. Check out www.streetfighter.com for more details.



PROJECTILE ATTACKS

Tekken characters are rather famously from a realm where they don't shoot fireballs from their hands. Granted, there are the lasers of Devil/Angel and the cheating from Azazel and Jinpachi, but generally speaking we don't see projectile attacks. This has been changed for *Street Fighter X Tekken* so the Namco brawlers can fit better with the

Capcom atmosphere. Not all of them have these kinds of moves, but we clocked the likes of Raven lobbing his blades across the screen and Steve Fox shooting some sort of projectile from his fists. Those without projectiles are still catered for, with the likes of Kazuya and Heihachi able to deflect, or absorb, whatever is lobbed at them.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- The *Tekken* characters work in the *Street Fighter* world, just about.
- It has a style very much pleasing to the eye.
- It knows how strange a concept it is and runs with the silliness.
- While there's no Jack, as far as we know, at least there's Kuma.

READ ME

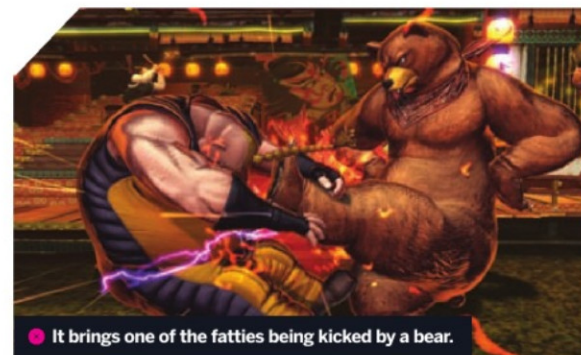
Namco and Capcom characters have been seen together in a videogame before, starring in 2005's *Namco X Capcom*, a PS2 tactical RPG that never saw release outside of the Far East. Annoyingly.

IT BRINGS...

What does a crossover bring with it?



It brings two fatties fighting.



It brings one of the fatties being kicked by a bear.

FITTING IN

The *Tekken* kids are in *Street Fighter*'s neighbourhood, so they have to play by the World Warriors' rules. That means no more limb-based button inputs, instead there's the usual light, medium, heavy mix – but with a couple of concessions. Reversals have made the transition for some of the *Tekken* fighters and ⊙ and ⊗ together initiates throws, just like in the Namco batter-'em-up. Other than that, though, we're looking at King pulling off powerbombs and Sharpshooters with quarter-circle motions and a button press, and Yoshimitsu's sword thrusts handled in much the same way. As for the *Street Fighter* bunch? They're on home turf. It's *Street Fighter*.

3



4

TAGGEDDON

Street Fighter X Tekken operates with a tag system, so you choose two characters and get to it. Unlike *Marvel Vs Capcom 3*, one character on your team being KO'd means you lose the round so you have to be ready to hammer ⊙ and ⊗ together to get Dirty Dirty Ken out when he's been battered by Zangief. You can also call in your partner to help out for a few seconds at the expense of all your meter while Pandora sacrifices one partner and gives unlimited supers and powered-up attacks for around five to seven seconds – the trade-off being that unless you KO your opponent in that time, you will lose automatically. Capcom says it will be rebalanced. Good job, too. It's useless right now.



EXPERT BALANCING

There are sure to be balance issues with *Street Fighter X Tekken* that we haven't picked up on yet – the kinds of things that only come with extended play. But we have noticed some foibles, along with some pleasant surprises. While Kuma, funny as he is, just doesn't fit, Rolento and Hwoarang appear to be very good indeed, though to the point where Rolento might need a bit more expert balancing for him to be... you know... fair. On the build we played he was able to spam his twirling stick attack in a corner up to six times in a row before leading into a super. That's just not (fighting) cricket.

5



● It brings two brilliant fighting game characters together.



● It brings back Lili, even though we don't know how to use her.



● It brings an Englishman about to punch a Chinese woman in the thigh.



RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY

Inversion

Saber Interactive on how to turn gaming, ahem, upside down

PS3 With its central gravity-manipulation mechanic, *Inversion* is hoping to breathe fresh life into a genre packed with grunting and enemies with necks thicker than their heads. **Play** caught up with Saber Interactive's Matthew Karch (CEO) and Nick Madonna (producer), to find out how it'll shake the earth beneath your very feet.

Outside of the gravity shifting, what else can you point to as unique selling points for *Inversion*?

NM: Mostly everything you have seen from *Inversion* has been centred around the single-player and co-op campaign – but we also have a fully featured multiplayer component designed to support up to 16 players competitively and four co-operatively. Players will be able to form a party and go through a matchmaking process that will cycle through a whole host of playlists and maps. *Inversion* multiplayer also has rank, challenge, unlock and character customisation components.

MK: I would say that we are doing more with physics in multiplayer than any other game I've seen. The same applies to the single-player campaign. This really adds to the sense of realism and ups the fun factor both online and offline.

***TimeShift* is a previous title of yours that had an interesting concept but released to a mixed reception. What lessons have you learnt from that?**

MK: On the business side, we learned that you need to choose your publishing partner very carefully. Our first publisher couldn't fund the game to completion so we needed to move on to another partner. That partner ended up merging with another publisher as we completed the game, which really hurt the game from a sales and promotion standpoint. I think [another] key lesson is not to release a new IP in-between *Halo* and *Call Of Duty*.

From a design perspective, we learned that cool mechanics don't always translate into a complete game. With *TimeShift*, the hook was cool but it couldn't really sustain itself for the entire game. We learned how to take a mechanic and integrate it into the game, but I think it still came across as somewhat forced and gimmicky. When we started working on *Inversion*, we made sure that the core mechanic would

translate into something that could span the entire game.

We also took more control over the story than we had in *TimeShift*. If you asked me today what the story was in *TimeShift*, I honestly wouldn't be able to tell you. I can tell you, however, that it was bad. *Inversion* has a much better story and one that integrates well into the gameplay.

What's the main reason that development on *Inversion* has taken longer than usual?

MK: I don't think it has really taken longer than most triple-A games that are based upon new ideas. The game will have three full years of development – which is definitely on the longer side for a sequel – but for a new game that is trying to do something a bit different and technically challenging, I think it's within reason. But I guess in a sense that answers the question – it's a new property with a new mechanic and it takes a while to properly iterate to get it feeling right.

This is quite a broad question, but if *Inversion* was remembered for its gravity gameplay, would that be pleasing for the studio or disappointing that it was only seen as that?

NM: We'd be pleased if *Inversion* was remembered for our innovative gameplay. Any type of recognition from the gaming community is always welcome. Positive feedback gives us an idea about what players like and what type of content we need to continue producing. Negative feedback is also helpful because we're able to identify things that didn't work and push harder to fix those issues in future.

Finally, what does the future hold for Saber Interactive?

NM: Immediate future? Gamers are able to play *Halo Anniversary*. Other than that, we're working hard putting polish on *Inversion* and getting it ready for release. We always have some interesting things cooking here at Saber!

Inversion is being developed by Saber Interactive. Check out www.inversion.com/ game for more details.

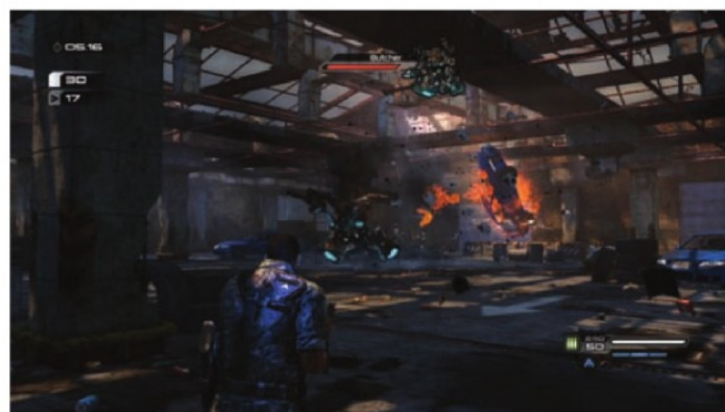
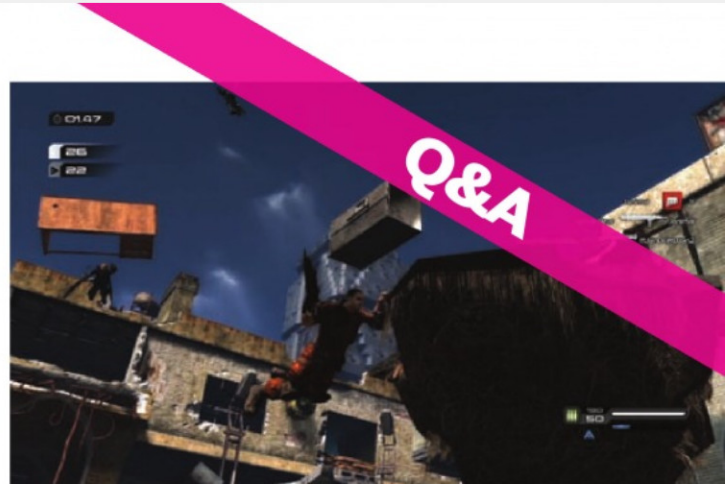
WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ❑ You can control gravity.
- ❑ You can shoot things.

- ❑ You can control gravity and shoot things.
- ❑ Detached limbs will float through the air.

READ ME

Inversion's central concept is certainly solid, but it's the invention with which it is treated that'll decide between triple-A and the bargain bucket.



UP AND DOWN

The Gravlink gun: gimmick or central gameplay pillar?

IN ORDER FOR *Inversion* to succeed, it is essential Saber's crucial Gravlink gun is used for purposes other than lifting enemies out of cover to be perforated, ad infinitum. The fact that gravity's overall direction can't be dictated by gamers means tedium would soon ensue, as this headline function could be easily replicated by grenades alone. Some thought beyond placing enemies beneath heavy objects wouldn't go amiss, either.

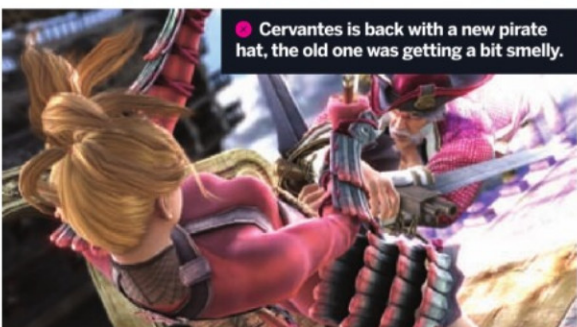
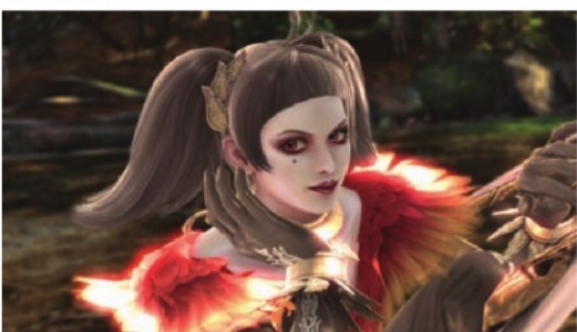




RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY

SoulCalibur V

Stop mashing. Stop mashing. STOP MASHING



● Cervantes is back with a new pirate hat, the old one was getting a bit smelly.



● Parry attempts now cost meter, putting more emphasis on side-stepping out of trouble.

WHERE'S TAKI?

Calm down, calm down

TAKI IS GONE. So is Kilik. And so is Sophitia and Cassandra and possibly others, too. They're replaced by younger characters who have almost identical movesets. For example, Taki's replacement Natsu still has her Possession stance, flips and so on. So stop panicking, the characters are still there. Stop. YOU'RE STILL PANICKING.



There's a ritual at Imagine Publishing HQ. Every evening at 6pm, we down tools (alright, fine, we stop typing) and huddle over by sister magazine **games™** to play *SoulCalibur V*.

There's **Play**, flipping around the stages with Taki replacement Natsu instead of attacking, because it's more fun. There's **games™**, spamming Nightmare's auto-parry explosion while the dark knight shouts "meat", a move we have creatively named 'meat'. And then there's **X360**, mashing on the buttons with Patroklos, doing moves by accident and giving confused, rambling replies when we shout at them to stop mashing.

Three different ways of playing, three different skill levels, everyone enjoying themselves. That's the thing with the *SoulCalibur* series. Players don't have to learn focus attack dash cancels into Ultra, or kara-roll cancels, or safe jump option selects, or any of the other wizardry demanded of fighting game fans before they have fun.

SoulCalibur enjoys a low barrier of entry and players have always been able to slam their fists into their pads for amazing moves to come out. Where the series fell down, however, is it never had the depth to match its initial lure – hence the lack of a long tournament shelf-life, hence the reliance on single-player modes (which have slowly been whittled

down with each outing), hence it being unable to stop *Street Fighter's* return to fighting game dominance.

It's too early to say whether *SoulCalibur V* will thrive at those high levels where a fighting game really excels but we can say, based on the disappointment on those rare evenings where people go straight home after work rather than playing *SoulCalibur V*, this is shaping up nicely. Introducing meter, which can be spent on Critical Edges (essentially supers), Brave Edges (enhanced versions of normal moves) or parry attempts gives *SoulCalibur V* a new tactical edge recent versions lacked.

It feels more fluid than previous versions, too, which goes some way to explaining why *SoulCalibur V* just seems to flow better, and prompts us to use wooly adjectives in place of descriptive, helpful terms.

Anyway. It's almost 6pm. Time to head off. Bye!

Namco Bandai are the clever cooks behind this tasty broth. Check in on the latest at www.soulcalibur.com

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ❑ Feels a lot more fun than previous versions.
- ❑ New characters make it feel fresh.
- ❑ Critical Edges and Brave Edges change gameplay.
- ❑ Character creation is genuinely brilliant.

READ ME

The fifth entry of the long-running gaming series which brings in Critical Edges and Brave Edges in a nod to 2D fighting games.



● The original art holds up really well.

RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY

Metal Gear Solid HD Collection

You're the best, arouuuund...

PS3

Oh look, it's the *Metal Gear Solid Collection*, shambling in at preview stage *after* the game is out in the US. What fresh madness is this? Do game publishers think it's still the Nineties? Do home console games still come on cartridges? Why are games still staggered in their releases?

Marketing, mainly. It's the 25th anniversary of *Metal Gear* next year, and Konami has decided to delay the release because it wants to make a big deal out of that. Which is frustrating for two reasons: the first being, er, IT'S ALREADY OUT IN AMERICA, and the second being this collection is truly excellent.

Comprising *MGS 2*, *MGS 3* and the formerly PSP-only *Peace Walker*, the care and attention poured into these conversions by Bluepoint Games (which also handled the *God Of War Collection Volume 1*) is staggering. The fact that the games' original assets are so stunning – especially *MGS 3*, which in terms of art direction looks better than most games released this generation – helps no end, but there truly hasn't been a better HD remaster than this yet on PlayStation 3: the games now look exactly as your nostalgia-addled mind remembered

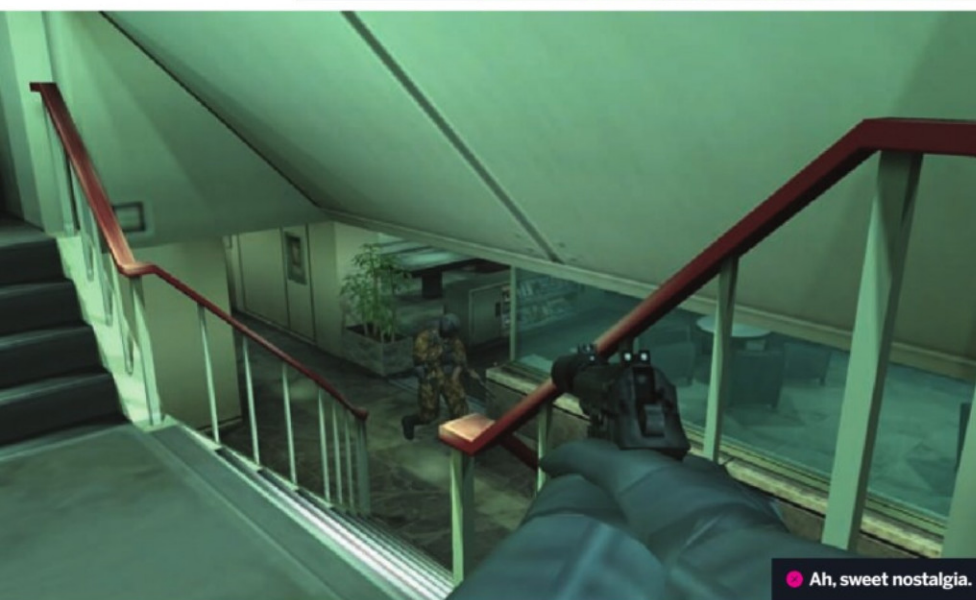
them. *MGS 2*'s steel-blue tanker is rendered with glorious accuracy, really showing off all of Kojima's attention to detail, and *MGS 3*'s lush jungles look vibrant and full of life. A fantastic achievement. *Peace Walker* doesn't look as good, but hey: what do you expect?

Gameplay-wise each title is identical to the version of the game that the remaster is based upon, so *MGS 2* still has its top-down camera (boo), *MGS 3* has a more traditional third-person camera based upon the *Subsistence* re-release (yay) and sadly both games are still massively fiddly when it comes to their control setups (awwww).

Which is pretty much the only real problem here. Old players will find their muscle memory kicking in as they ease back through, while new players will be wondering why they have to hold four or five buttons to shoot a man from cover. It's frustrating, and the only thing keeping this from getting 9,000% from us.

That said, after an hour or so you'll be back in the swing of things, and this is a must-buy. In February. Thanks Konami.

MGS HD Collection is being developed by Bluepoint Games. Check out www.bluepointgames.com for more details.



● Ah, sweet nostalgia.

● *MGS 3* in particular looks beautiful.



CAM SHOW

The Survival Viewer returns, **Play** rejoices

THIS SCREEN WILL become one of the most important in your journey from stealth noob to master throat slitter. Here you'll be able to adjust your camo index, blending in with the diverse jungle backgrounds, as well as healing wounds and eating all of the food you've captured/killed. In true Kojima fashion, eating something and then rotating Snake for a certain amount of time will make him vomit when you return to the actual game. Just one of the many incidental touches that makes the *MGS* series the work of a demented genius that it is.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Has the original *Metal Gear* and *Metal Gear 2* on the disc.
- It's *Metal Gear Solid 3*.
- Includes *MGS 2*'s Snake Tales mini-missions.
- The first time *Peace Walker* has been on a home console.

READ ME

Thanks to the HD collection's upgraded graphics it's now actually a little more difficult to spot enemies in *Metal Gear Solid 3*'s lush jungles, making a classic stealth game even better.

PREVIEW

Noel gave up much more quiet

The legends say it lies at the end of the distant
e, that it's the real



DOES EZIO EVER STOP?

Assassin's Creed blade-wielder
turns up again

WE REALLY HOPE there aren't people
out there who loathe the sight of Ezio
because, guess what? He's turning up
in another game! Well, not him exactly,
but his costume will be available as
downloadable content. So that's
SoulCalibur V and *Final Fantasy XIII-2*.
Where will he appear next?

BIG SCREEN



Here he is, Caius Ballad, the main villain of *Final Fantasy XIII-2*. Scared?

RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY

Final Fantasy XIII-2

Here's the man you're supposed to hate



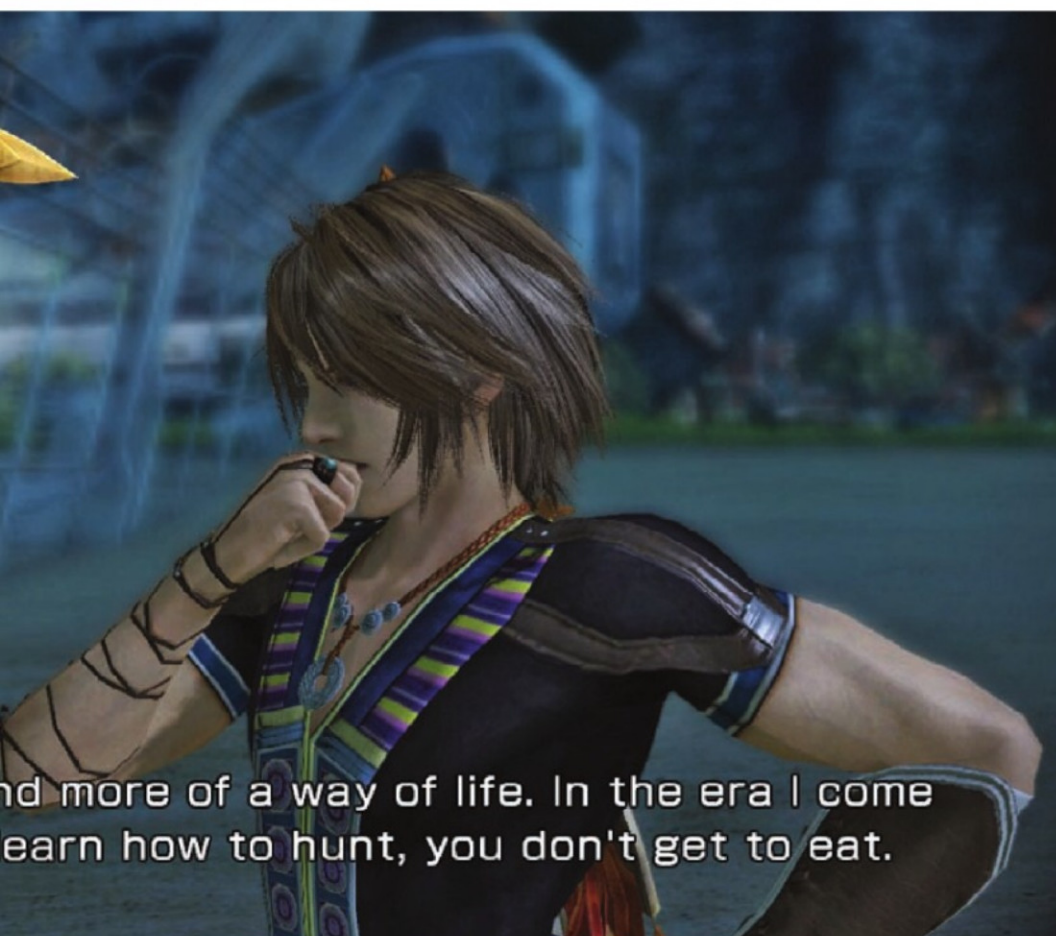
Caius Ballad. We wouldn't ever call ourselves that, not even if we'd only just beamed onto this planet with nothing but knowledge of cosplay forums. Then again, Square Enix naming convention has never been anything but normal – hello Quina, Seymour Guado and Lady Yunaesca – so the introduction of *Final Fantasy XIII-2*'s villain, Caius Ballad, is met more with a rolling of the eyes than anything else.

His back story also ranks fairly high on Play's patented Ridiculous-O-Meter. The guardian of time,

Caius was Noel's friend and mentor. But now Noel has the ability to tamper with time – one of the new gameplay features in *XIII-2* – this throws him into conflict with Caius.

Hopefully *Final Fantasy XIII-2* will stick with Caius Ballad as the main villain and avoid 'this is the *real* cause of the mayhem!' reveals right at the end, as seen with *Final Fantasy VIII* (Ultimécia) and *Final Fantasy X* (Yu Yevon).

Square Enix is developing **Final Fantasy XIII-2**, with finalfantasy13-2game.com home of further updates, news and more ridiculously named characters.



and more of a way of life. In the era I come
earn how to hunt, you don't get to eat.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Should address all fan feedback from *FFXIII*.
- Unless your name is Caius Ballad.
- It has time travel and time travel is always good!
- Don't know what his problem is, to be honest.

READ ME

Final Fantasy XIII-2 is not the first direct sequel in the series. That title falls to *Final Fantasy X-2*, a game which decided to go in an embarrassing girl power direction.

RELEASE DATE: TBC 2012

Resistance: Burning Skies

Hands-on with the fiery handheld shooter



We've said it before, but *Resistance 3* surprised us with how good a game it was, so it was with great vengeance and furious anger (also: happiness) that we took to the task of playing through some of the next game in the series, *Resistance: Burning Skies*. Yes, this means we got to play with a PSVita once more and, yes, that means we can spout off a little bit about how nifty a piece of kit it is.

But this isn't the place to go hardware crazy – how does *Resistance* translate to the new handheld? It did okay last time around with *Retribution*, but this time we have more graphical grunt and a better control scheme to hand. Does that make for a better game? We'll have to wait and see.



1

RESIST CONTROL

In the world of Real Consoles this is something of a non-issue, but it's one of those elements we simply have to bring up time and time again when it comes to PSVita: control. Specifically, how twin-stick control changes the playing field when it comes to handheld gaming. No more struggling through with compromised, face-button-based schemes or anything referred to as a 'nub'. This is an FPS controlled how you know FPS games to be controlled – two proper sticks, one moves the body, the other moves the head. How does it feel? Comfortable and – importantly – correct. Easy to get used to and functional, how can we complain?



SO PURTY

Locking eyes on the Vita screen brings back memories of another time – that time when we first saw the PSP's screen and were similarly wowed. Fortunately *Resistance* does this new, lovely, touchable screen credit by being rather pretty indeed. We've heard claims bandied around of Vita titles being visually on a par with PS3 games, but that's pushing it a fair bit. But that's not to say it looks anything other than good, with one section in particular conjuring up the mental image of being in a *Blade Runner* game. Odd, with *Burning Skies* being set in the Fifties (clue: it's alien architecture, it's fine).

2

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Two sticks – we cannot stress this enough – is a revelation.
- Does the Vita proud by being pretty gosh darn spiffy.
- Constant access to a fire axe: it's what we all want in life.
- Resistance 3* was very good, so we have the Chimera bug right now – we want more.

READ ME

Nihilistic Software was behind the mediocre *PlayStation Move Heroes* and the average *Zombie Apocalypse*. We're not going to let that colour our judgement, though.

3

GETTING TOUCHY

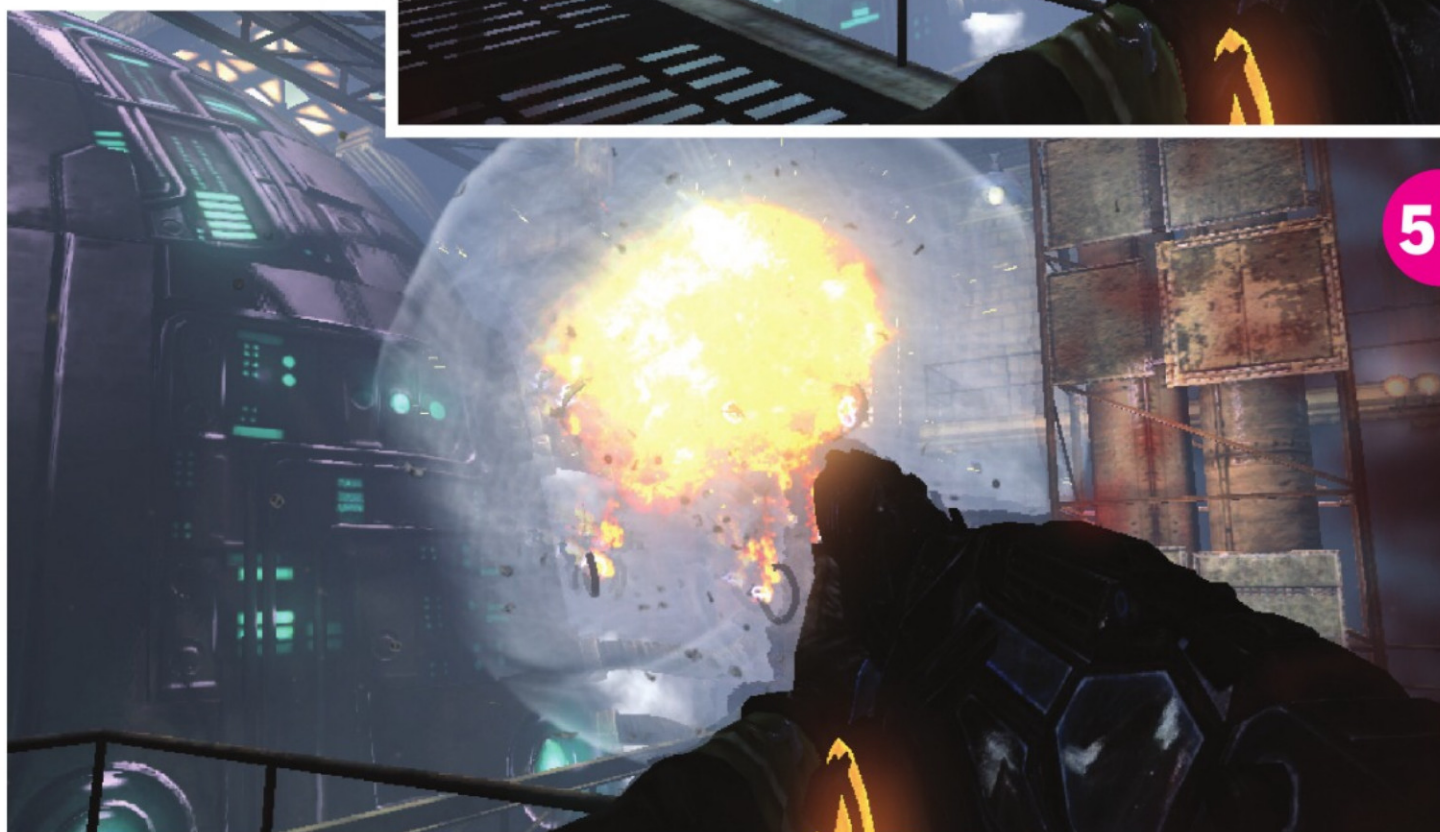
Twin sticks are one element of control we have to mention with Vita games and touch screen is the other one. Yes, it's here in *Burning Skies* – the back pad wasn't used as far as we're aware, but the front screen was employed in some decidedly non-gimmicky ways. Always on screen is the icon allowing the player to wallop with the character's fire axe, and the tagging system on the Cluster Fire Gun is handled with swipes across the screen. Best of all, though, is grenades – tap and hold to select, drag where you want it to be thrown, release: simple, effective, actually better than pad/button controls. It's the future (of grenades).



LIFE OF RILEY

4

What is Tom Riley, lead character and firefighter of *Resistance: Burning Skies*, doing? What's his motivation? Why is he fighting the Chimera in the time frame between the original *Resistance* and the first sequel? Well, we haven't been told yet. Our time with the game started with Riley getting out of a bed, picking up his axe and bringing the pain to some alien/hybrid scumbags. We asked if it would be a continuation of cult SNES/PSone series *The Firemen*, but this was met with a firm "don't be silly" by the Sony representative. The story has been under the guidance of an experienced *Resistance* novel-writer, though, so we're sure the tone will be spot-on.



5

EARLY DAYS

The overall experience of what we were able to play was brief, but gave us a good idea of what to expect. We're not going to catch a ride on the Hyperbole Express just because *Burning Skies* is on a new handheld we want to be brilliant – it didn't blow us away. If anything, it reminded us of the original two *Resistance* games: standard. Fun, but standard. But we played nowhere near enough to get a properly rounded opinion on the thing, and the simple fact a fairly short demo was fun gives us hope for the finished product. After all, *Resistance* games have a history of taking us by surprise.



RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY

Uncharted: Golden Abyss

Uncharted Unplugged, for purists only



You know what *Uncharted* is about by now. Drake finds treasure in exotic locales, bad guys also find treasure in same locales, Drake and bad guys run into each other, gun fights and comedy one-liners ensue. *Golden Abyss* looks to be that same mix which powered the series into gaming's elite. That's no surprise.

What you don't know is how it controls. This is why we're here! Talking to you! About controls! Compared to full-fat *Uncharted* on PS3 with its many shoulder buttons (well, four), it takes getting used to on Vita. Left trigger to aim, right trigger to shoot. So far, so *Uncharted*. But what of grenades? You select them on the touch screen and tap where you want to throw them. It's a system that lends itself to more immediate accuracy than the system of old but loses out on the run-away-and-throw-grenade-in-panic system a one-button press afforded us.

Scampering around the walls and footholds of the temples can now be done by drawing a line across the areas you want to climb.

Drake's other trademark moves such as aiming and shooting while climbing can be used in addition to the touch screen, which means a bit of hasty handwork when swapping between screen and buttons. The coolest mechanic is the way sniping works. When scoped, you refine your aiming by tilting the Vita itself. It seems gimmicky at first but it makes headshots feel like your handiwork. It's perversely satisfying.

As for the game itself, we haven't seen or played anything to suggest set pieces on the scale of *Uncharted 3*. That would be ludicrous. But there's been a worrying lack of any set pieces being shown off at all, in comparison to how many times Naughty Dog wheeled out the cargo plane in its *Uncharted 3* press tours. Is this the stripped-back, pure gameplay version of *Uncharted*? What Drake's adventures would look like without the bells, whistles and coincidental mishaps? It's looking increasing likely.

Bend Studio and **Naughty Dog** are working on this project. Check out bendgamestudio.com for updates.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- It's *Uncharted* unplugged! Until you run out of battery that is.
- Tilt and touch screen controls are smart but will take some getting used to.
- More gameplay over the spectacular set pieces of *Uncharted* on PS3.
- Sully, Drake and Elena are gaming's greatest trio since... another. Trio. Ahem.

READ ME

Taking place before *Drake's Fortune's* story, Nate is climbing, shooting and exploring in another adventure that will lead him to treasure.

IN-DEPTH

● We've yet to see any big set pieces from Sony, which is unusual for an *Uncharted* game.



● The controls work well but will take some getting used to for those used to PS3 *Uncharted*.



MULTIPLAYER?

No. Sorry for ruining the boxout

UNCHARTED MIGHT BE trudging along the path of multiplayer, with *Uncharted 2* introducing the element and *Drake's Deception* refining it, but it doesn't look like it'll be part of *Golden Abyss*. The official page for *Golden Abyss* states no network play and it's not something that's been mentioned by Sony thus far.





● Straightforward games, but ones that take advantage of Vita's controls.

RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY 2012

Little Deviants

Gaming's Deviant influence isn't far away now



It's really not too much of a push for us to say we don't think *Little Deviants* will go down in history as something everyone has to play. But while we don't expect it to change the very fabric of gaming, we aren't down on the concept – as we've said before, every new technology needs its showcase. What better way than a collection of mini-games using Vita's

different touch screens, gyroscopes, flaps, extendable arms and cameras? *House Of Whacks*, the reasonably simple whack-a-mole type of game, is currently vying for our choice as favourite game. Mainly because it's a bit of a stress relief to jab at the screen and be rewarded for it – though remembering to incorporate rear touch pad jabs is something our brains apparently have

trouble with. The other mini-game trying to dominate our attention so far is the maddeningly addictive *Depth Charge*, where players navigate a tiny octo-thing to the bottom of a cave in order to safely dispose of a bomb (by engulfing it and letting it explode, naturally). Why's it so good? Both because the controls work well and because we're quite good at it.

Then there's the news that those who pre-order the Vita will get a discount code for the game. It's not earth-shattering news, but it's something. Sort of like what we expect from the whole game, really.

Little Deviants is being developed by Bigbig Studios. Check out www.bigbigstudios.com for more details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- The use of motion and touch doesn't feel crowbarred in.
- It's cute, there's personality to it – it doesn't feel dead.
- Though admittedly it does feel more like a tech demo.
- The 'falling octo cave' (not official name) game is actually good fun.

READ ME

Bigbig Studios, a fairly small studio, created the PSP cult classic *Pursuit Force*. Remember that one? No? Just us? Oh.



● Shoot the old people on the bench! Ah, wait...



● It's hard to line up your fingers on the back pad for this game.



● Shoot them in the back. SHOOT THEM.



● We probably couldn't make a track as cool as this one.

● Robotic monsters: a classic of the racing genre.

RELEASE DATE: TBC 2012

ModNation Racers: Road Trip

Now you can take your Road Trip on the road



Things have been a bit quiet on the *ModNation* front in recent times, at least when it comes to the PSVita version. But all of that has changed, as we now have a subtitle – *Road Trip* – and the usual wave of excitement that comes with a bit more info about a game we really want to be really good.

Granted, what we've played of *ModNation Racers* so far hasn't blown us away, at least not in the racing part of things. Stuttering and riddled with slowdown, we really are hopeful these were just issues as a result of the code being so early and unoptimised. After all, the rest of the experience – powersliding around corners before blasting an

opponent with an oversized rocket then doing a few twirls in the air as you leap over the finish line (at least, if you're as good at games as we are) is something we would be happy to accommodate on the new handheld.

Fortunately, the user-generated content is just as good as before, if not better. Touch-screen controls lend themselves perfectly to a feature such as this and we can see ourselves taking advantage of the simple, yet robust track-creation tools on any bus ride we take our Vita on. Just so long as the rest of the game is up to scratch.

ModNation Racers: Road Trip is being developed by SCE San Diego Studio. Check out www.modnation.com for more details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- The user-generated-content element is flowing and easy.
- One suggestion for the name of the game was 'Steve'. No joke.
- And it means we'll have lots of tracks to play with.
- Portable kart racing is a necessity for life happiness. We think.

READ ME

SCE San Diego's first game was *The Mark Of Kri*, which we bestowed a highly respectable 78% on in *Play 100* – a looong time ago...



1

ISSUES OF CONTROL

Escape Plan is one of the few titles we've played on Vita that eschews pad/button-based controls in favour of the touch screen and touchpad. While the sticks are still used to manipulate the camera, all of the main controls are swipes and taps on the front and back. This makes for a scheme that's simple to get used to and intuitive throughout – need to push something from the back to foreground? Tap it from behind. Move? Swipe the direction you want to go. The addition of non-intrusive gyroscopic controls just helps to make the whole thing feel like – much as we are loath to say this – it was built from the ground up with Vita in mind.

RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY

Escape Plan

Escape or die. Actually – escape AND die



It's always best when a game surprises you, just like *Escape Plan* has. We'd seen this pretty-looking puzzler doing the rounds since gamescom, but it wasn't until recently we had some quality time with it. Turns out it might well be one of Vita's best early games, at least if initial impressions are anything to go by.

A puzzle game that instantly brings back memories of the PSone classics from the *Oddworld* series, *Abe's Oddysee* and *Abe's Exoddus*, *Escape Plan* sees players controlling two characters – Lil and Laarg – as they... escape. What this translates to is a series of puzzles involving numerous different uses of touch control, a beautiful, stark art style and some brutal, punishing deaths. It's certainly not a light-hearted romp through Candy Cane Land.



2

NOT HERE TO PATRONISE

It's a fairly common issue with modern gaming – we're led by the hand, patronised, unable to fail, coddled. Devs seem afraid to punish us for mistakes. *Escape Plan* isn't one of these games. It's not mind-meltingly hard from what we've seen, but it does have puzzles that require pause for

thought – and if you don't pause for thought, you'll quickly end up dead. Not just dead, but dead in a rather violent fashion – crushed, minced, splatted, burned. You are punished for getting it wrong, but things are so swiftly reset for another go that all you can do is learn from your mistakes and try again.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Clever, simple use of touch controls that make sense.
- It's not patronising, and it is fairly difficult.
- It reminds us of *Abe's Oddysee/Exoddus*. Obviously a great thing.
- It's really rather pretty, in a delightfully understated way.

READ ME

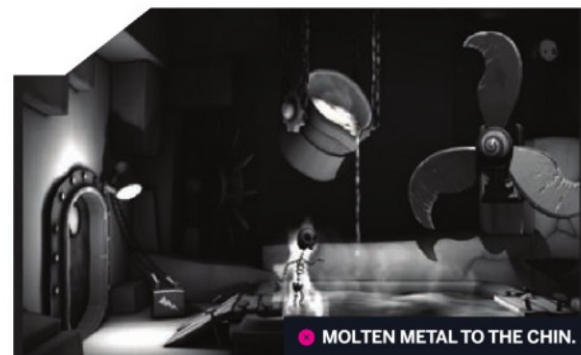
The game's developer, Fun Bits Interactive, has only existed for two years. *Escape Plan* is the company's first full release since forming in 2009. We don't count its *Fat Princess* DLC.

HOW TO DIE

Escape Plan is a game that will kill you. A lot



● SPIKE POP MANIA.

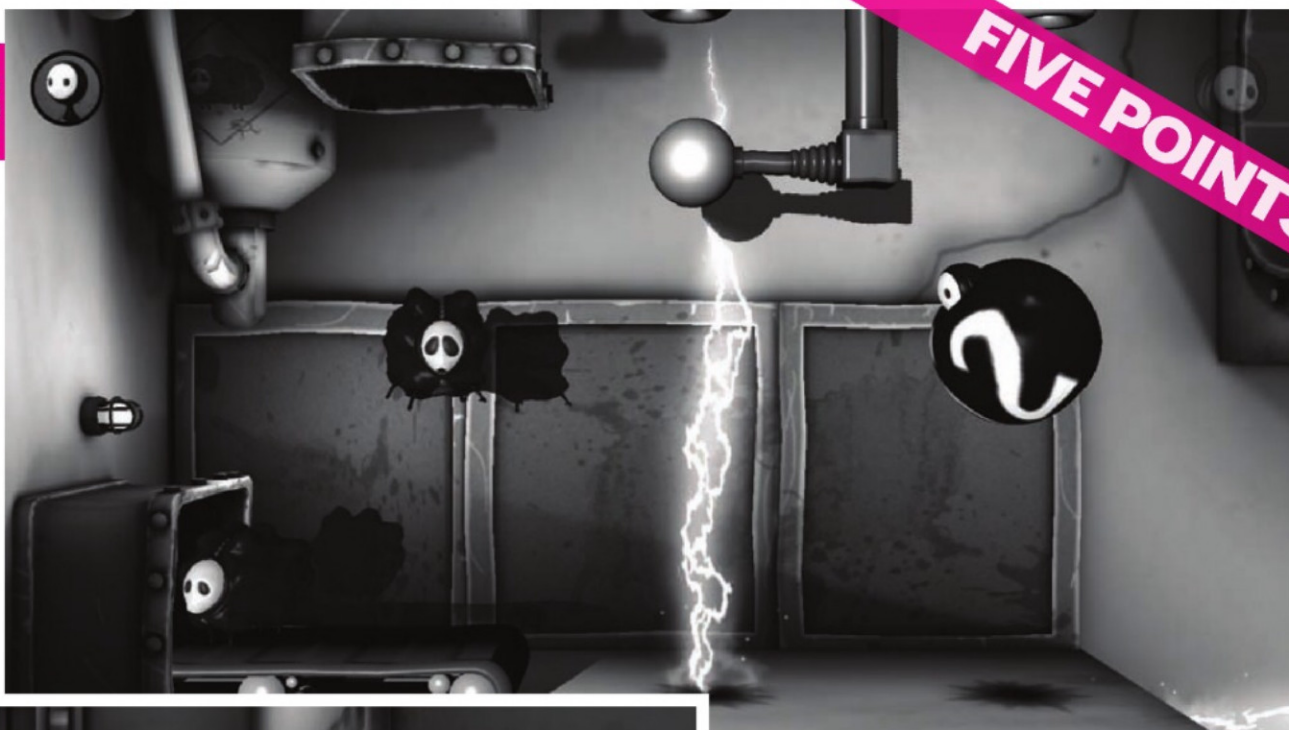


● MOLTEN METAL TO THE CHIN.

3

ON STYLE

It's clear just glancing around these pages that *Escape Plan* is home to a distinctive, stark art style. Lacking in colour (otherwise known as 'being black and white') just aids the rather morbid, oppressive atmosphere Fun Bits is clearly hoping to put across. It's stark and foreboding, but the character designs and general artistic direction lead to something more fantastical, bringing in an air of the aforementioned *Oddworld* and even some hints of Tim 'Before He Was Shit' Burton. For all the cutesy overtones of the characters and their cartoonish world, this is very much a game with a dark tone and some mildly sadistic tendencies.



4

SCORES ON THE BOARD

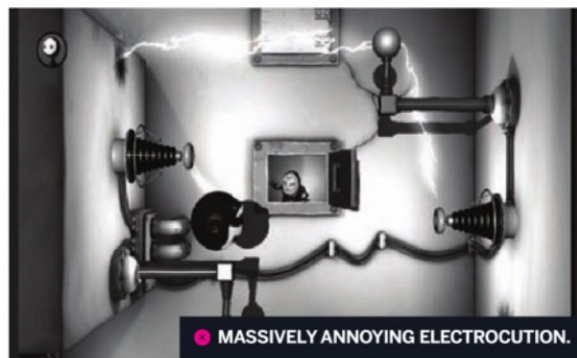
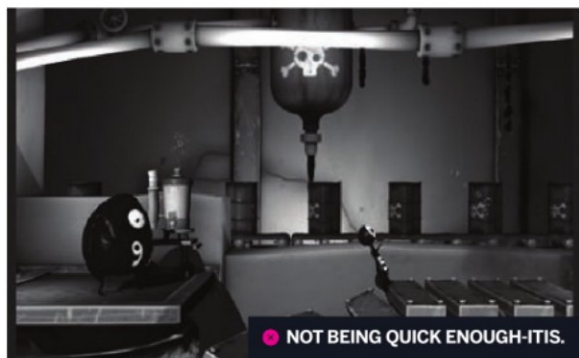
Escape Plan is looking to take cues from the likes of *Angry Birds* in how it presents levels and scoring. The end of each sequence presents players with a rating out of three stars – a quick reference point to if you did 'alright', 'a bit better' or 'quite well' and the sort of thing that will surely encourage repeated play and the sort of obsessive, compulsive mania that comes with many bite-sized puzzle games that deem us worthy of their delicious, life-giving reward stars. Does this mean the game will be short but replayable? We don't yet know. But we'd hope for a long, deep and rewarding experience that drags you back to replay and replay again.



DOES IT FIT?

Escape Plan stands out in the early Vita lineup by virtue of it not being a big-name Sony property that 'looks like a PS3 game on handheld' or whatever other crass statements are thrown around. Instead it fills the gap of a release more concerned with functionality and clever use of the technology available, rather than cramming in all of the touch and tilt features to a type of game that already exists on PS3. Not that we have anything against the likes of *Uncharted: Golden Abyss*, obviously – we're just a bit more open to the prospects of a more bespoke experience. Will it be successful though? We hope so.

5





Buy it once, get it on both PS3 and Vita. YEAH.

RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY

MotorStorm RC

Zoom out, shrink the cars and look to the past for inspiration



It's still unmistakably MotorStorm.

CROSS-PLATFORM PAY

But, for once, the price is right. **MOTORSTORM RC** takes advantage of cross-platform play, allowing it to be enjoyed on both Vita and PS3. How is Evolution approaching this from a pricing perspective? Well, purchasers of the game get it for both formats from the off. If other developers follow this path, our worries about having to buy two copies of every game could well go unfounded.



We haven't even mentioned twin-stick controls. IT HAS THEM.

PS3

The launch lineup for PlayStation Vita went from having most bases covered to all of them in one fell swoop, as soon as Evolution Studios announced it would be introducing a follow-up entry to the *MotorStorm* series. Oh, and it takes cues from the Amiga classics *Skidmarks*, *Micro Machines* and *Super Off Road*.

Our younger readers might well be confused by that statement, so here's some explanation: *MotorStorm RC* is a top-down (more isometric, but you get the point) racing game where players take control of diddy little remote-controlled cars in a battle to... well, just to win. It's not the deepest of experiences, nor is it aiming to be, but it looks to be a nice distraction and have enough interesting ideas of its own to keep us interested. Plus, anything that reminds us of *Skidmarks* is an instant win.

Competition against AI is the main draw, while four-player local multiplayer is available. Rather than

online head-to-heads, *RC* sees the 3G-friendly asynchronous style we'll be seeing more of with PS Vita. Friends' times are downloaded to the device and entered into your races, meaning while the AI might be eating your dust, the little coloured arrows representing friends probably won't be. At least, not from what we've seen of the game. Though our excuse stands: our first play on *MotorStorm RC* versus the times of Evolution's QA department isn't exactly fair.

MotorStorm RC looks like an interesting, fun addition to Vita's launch lineup. Evolution Studios is aiming to support the game with around six months' worth of DLC following release so there will hopefully be plenty here to convince people this is more than just a distraction. Plus, at the basest of levels, it both looks nice and plays quite well – and you can't argue with those odds.

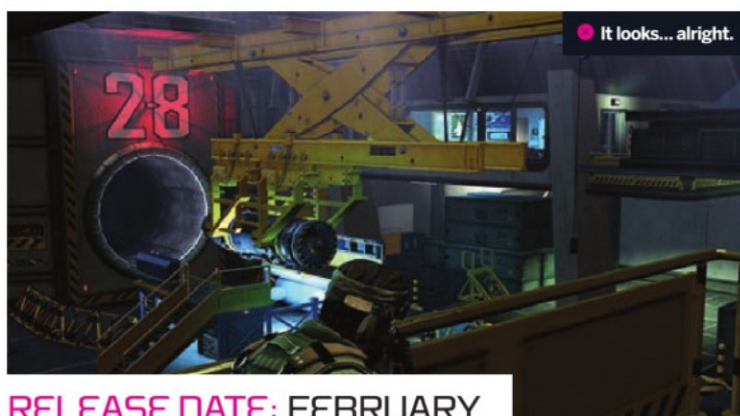
MotorStorm RC is being developed by Evolution Studios. Check out www.evost.net for more details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Basic, simple, straightforward fun.
- Interesting asynchronous multiplayer options.
- Cross-platform play shows us what to expect in future.
- It reminds us of *Skidmarks*. The game, that is.

READ ME

Super Skidmarks, *Super Off Road* and *Micro Machines* are three influences on *RC*. They are also all super. As in good, not all named 'super'.



RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY

Unit 13

Huh huh, you said 'Unit'



If you've played any shooter from Zipper Interactive in the past, you've played something very similar to *Unit 13*. To call it the most underwhelming PSVita title we've played so far would be a reasonably sized understatement, and while we're obviously not writing it off pre-release, we are worried that it'll be another pile of forgettable Manshooter tosh.

But let's talk about what we do know: *Unit 13* is a third-person shooter that sees players control a man, with guns, who shoots people. There's some story behind it but it really isn't worth getting worked up about. Thanks to Vita's twin sticks we can control him properly and it works nicely, allowing smooth movement through the corridors, dropping in and out of cover with a button press.



Also, while rather uninspired implementations of it, the touch screen controls are quite well done. Reloading, throwing grenades, hitting switches – it's all done with on-screen prompts, easily reached with your thumbs and actually doing a good job of making things a bit simpler. Not that there's anything wrong with using $\otimes$ to press buttons, obviously.

Unit 13 feels much like a game made to tick the box of the shooter genre, and it looks like it will do just that. Just don't expect too much from it.

Unit 13 is being developed by Zipper Interactive. Check out www.zipperint.com for more details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- It shows shooters can be handled on PlayStation Vita.
- High score challenges could turn out to be an addictive element.
- There is definitely an audience for this sort of thing.
- It just isn't really anything to get excited about for us.

RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY

Touch My Katamari

Yes, we have the music stuck in our heads



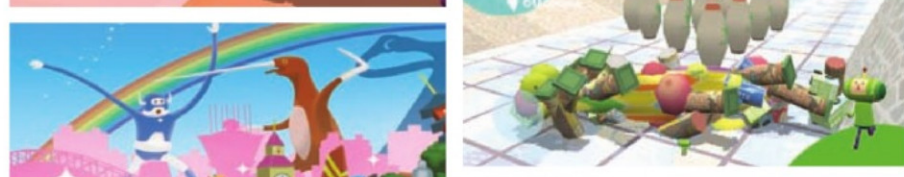
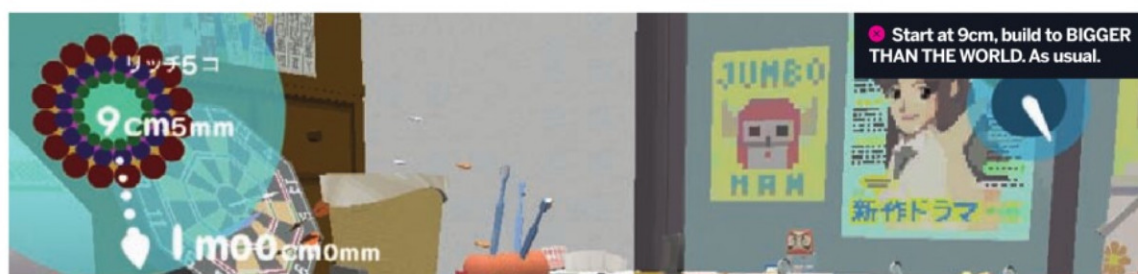
We don't know what's more exciting – the fact that the off-mentioned two sticks of Vita means we can control *Touch My Katamari* properly, or the fact the also-off-mentioned touch screen and touchpad controls of PSVita mean we can do something a bit different with the ball-rolling formula. It's probably the latter, actually.

For you see, using the front touch screen allows you to control the little Prince as he rolls the sticky katamari around the world, picking up smaller items and building the ball's size. That's all well and good. But it's the rear touchpad that makes for the actual game-changing feature – manipulating the back of the handheld allows you

to flatten or squeeze your katamari together. Why? Well, when it's flattened you are able to pick up objects in a wider range, and a thinner ball allows access to areas that would otherwise be a bit too... well, *thin* to get in.

Is it a gimmick? Yes. Will it affect the game in massive ways? Probably not. Is it still the usual joyous lark that is a game in the *Katamari* series? Most likely yes, at least from what we played. And it wouldn't be the experience we all wanted if the soundtrack wasn't instantly recognisable as belonging to this particular franchise. And you know what? Naaa, na na na na na naaaa...

Touch My Katamari is being developed by Namco Bandai. Check out www.namco.com for more details.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- More *Katamari* is never a bad thing. Literally never a bad thing.
- Touchpad controls actually fit the logic of the game.
- Originally planned for PS3, meaning it's not just a quick hackjob.
- Music.

RELEASE DATE: TBC 2012

Super Stardust Delta

This series is eighteen (18) years old. Wow

PSV In a world of flash-in-the-pan PSN games, popping up, grabbing our attention then disappearing and being completely forgotten about after stealing all the plaudits, there has been one constant. It was the shining star in the crown of Sony's 3D gaming push, wowing us with the sort of effects that make you visibly mouth 'wow' in that really annoying way that normally only people on TV do. It's been ever-present, taking up a respectable amount of playing time on a weekly basis even though it's now four and a half years old. It is, of course, *Super Stardust HD*.

So it is with great joy we can report *Super Stardust Delta*, the PSVita iteration again developed by Housemarque, hits the same notes of maddeningly addictive gaming we hoped it would. Actually, we sort of feared it would. We only have so much gaming time in a day, after all.

Not to put too fine a point on it, *Delta* is *Super Stardust* again. A twin-stick shooter, this time with the benefit of having twin-sticks on a handheld version, that sees players controlling a spaceship battling encroaching waves of asteroids

and enemy ships. It's simple, straightforward and fun. Strategy comes into play in the shape of the different weapons at hand – some handle different types of space rock better than others – and it's a game that prides itself on being really quite intense and rather difficult. Good points all around there, then.

But what about Vita-specific features? Well, the touch screen is employed to detonate smart bombs – wherever you tap on the screen is where they will detonate, allowing for more strategic positioning of the explosions as you play. The weirder feature involves Vita's Sixaxis technology – move the handheld around and the on-screen view will pan left, right, up or down to match your movements, giving you a better view of the action in that area. It's... well, it doesn't seem to have much point and actually felt more like an irritation than anything else. If it can be turned off, though, we don't see why *Delta* will be anything other than What We Want.

Super Stardust Delta is being developed by Housemarque. Check out www.housemarque.com for more details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ❑ *Super Stardust HD* is an overlooked PSN gem, no doubt.
- ❑ Just like previous *Super Stardust* games, it's a looker, no doubt.
- ❑ Actually having twin sticks makes it better to play, no doubt.
- ❑ You can probably turn off the pointless Sixaxis controls, no doubt.

READ ME

The *Stardust* series has been going since the days of the Amiga, and has always been in the capable hands of the Finns at Housemarque.



IL EST DIFFICILE

Ou est-ce? OU EST-CE?

DIFFICULTY IS AN important factor with *Super Stardust* and we're glad to report that *Delta* retains the challenge that makes it what it is. Naturally we'll need to play the whole thing before we can say if it's easier, harder, fair, unfair, whatever, but from our time with the game so far it's safe to say it's no walk in the (space) park.

Banana suits legally make everything more awesome, according to the internet.



RELEASE DATE: TBC 2012

Reality Fighters

The Reality isn't all that great



Having had more time to play about with *Reality Fighters* it's becoming all too obvious that, barring some huge changes or massive shocks, it's not going to be a reason to pick up a Vita. All the same, it has some interesting features that manage to tickle our curiosity gland and make it actually worth paying some attention to.

The main draw is, of course, creating a brawler to have some fisticuffs with. Photograph your face and put it on the avatar you create, use existing ones, whatever – basically you create your own little dude(tte) and make them punch other dude(tte)s. The fighting itself is a bit clunky, rather boring and

we're genuinely struggling to think of any good things about it from what we've played. It doesn't make the Vita explode in your hands when you play it. That'll have to do.

But the interesting factors in *Reality Fighters* come from the implementation

The fighting itself is a bit clunky and rather boring

of augmented reality features. It's unfortunate that the main draw comes in the shame of these unashamedly gimmicky features, but they do raise some smiles. Your battleground can be anywhere you point the Vita's rear camera, a few backgrounds included with the game or – most interestingly – a 3D photo you personally have taken. These photos are really good, actually, and we'd genuinely like to see a 3D photo app released separately for Vita. Because we're unlikely to be buying *Reality Fighters* for the game part.

Reality Fighters is being developed by Novarama. Check out www.novarama.com for more details.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- The 3D photo feature could well be brilliant. A lot better than the game part, certainly.
- The buttons react when you press them. That's pretty good, right?
- In fact, we'd settle for the 3D photo thing and no game attached at all.
- And... umm... no, we've run out. That's all we've got. Sorry.



RELEASE DATE: TBC 2012

We see this on every shot we take.

Everybody's Golf

Making Everybody feel like a Hot Shot

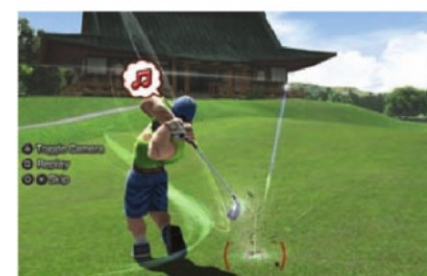


We were initially confused as to the touch screen implementation in

Everybody's Golf on PSVita, so naturally we sought the game out and gave it a good, thorough going-over to remove any uncertainty. Turns out we didn't really need to bother, because – from what we've seen – it doesn't do a lot.

Tap a tree to make it rustle, reposition your golfer when teeing off, change the time of day by sliding your finger across the screen – it's not exactly *The Future Of Gaming*. But then, it doesn't feel like a particularly bad thing in part because you're not being forced to use strange, ham-fisted implementations of control schemes to play the game. The other reason it isn't a bad thing? Well, it's *Everybody's Golf*.

We would say 'arguably' the best golfing game on PS3 and PSP, but there's really little argument in it – *Everybody's Golf*, *Hot Shots*, *Minna No*, whatever you want to call it is the



We would say 'arguably' the best golfing game on PS3 and PSP, but there's little argument in it

most fun, well-realised and all around brilliant game simulating the perfect way to ruin a nice walk on Sony's consoles. It's still business as usual on the Vita version, basically playing out as a portable version of the 91%-rated PS3 game. Will there be enough new about *Everybody's Golf* on Vita for us to get really excited? We're not sure about that. But we still expect to love it.

Everybody's Golf is being developed by Clap Hanz. Check out <http://uk.playstation.com/everybodysgolfpsv/> for more details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- It's the best golfing series in the world, ever. IT IS.
- Vita-specific controls are ignorable, but they don't negatively impact on the game.
- Online multiplayer wherever you are: a very good thing.
- It's a guarantee we'll be playing the Vita for at least 500 hours.



It looks pretty much as good as the PS3 version, actually.

PREVIEW



XCOM

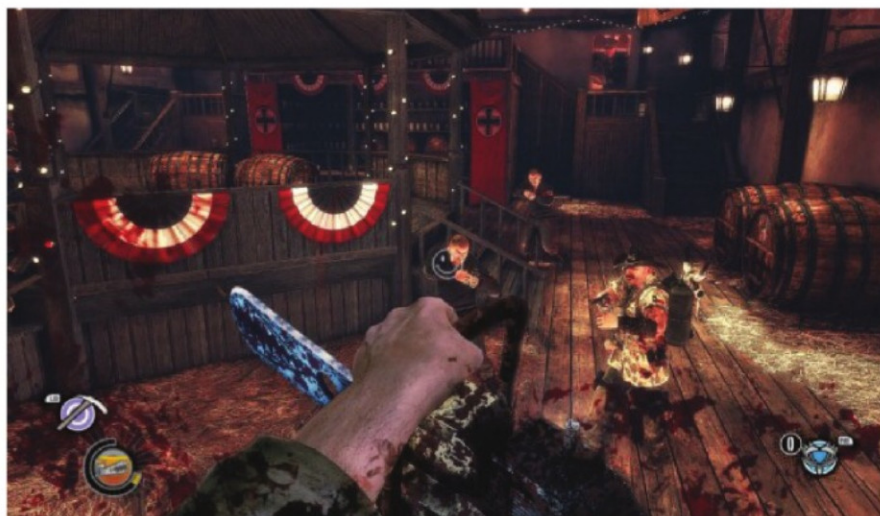


PUBLISHER: 2K **DEVELOPER:** 2K Marin **ETA:** April 2012

Remember when this was first announced and absolutely everyone lost their minds? *Wah*, it's not *XCOM*. *Wah*, it's not how we remember it. *Wah*, it's not the Nineties any more.

Yes, we know all of this. And frankly we're glad: times have changed and this new iteration of *XCOM* looks to be combining the best of modern technology with the series' famous strategising. While the game might be a first-person shooter, that doesn't mean that you're going to be spending your time getting into *Call Of Duty* man-shoot firefights.

Instead you'll be dividing up resources, upgrading captured alien equipment and deciding which agency assets to send out to various battlezones across the US. Combine all of this with a glorious Fifties vibe and you've got a game with serious potential. So, in the immortal words of Arnold Schwarzenegger: stop whining.



BROTHERS IN ARMS: FURIOUS 4



PUBLISHER: Ubisoft **DEVELOPER:** Gearbox **ETA:** TBC 2012

We know what you're thinking: way to sell out, Gearbox. As if that abomination *Duke Nukem Forever* wasn't bad enough, now the developer is turning its hand to sub-Tarantino-style World War II shooting. Tsk, eh?

We-el, yes it does sound like Gearbox has jumped on the bandwagon, but we're not sure that's a bad thing. After all, the last time anyone found a WWII game even exciting was probably closer to the actual conflict than today, and this one seems so over the top it's untrue: after all, can taser-ing a man in the balls really be offensive? No.

The '4' of the title are your standard ass-kickers: your big heavy weapons guy, the acrobatic one, the one nobody cares about and a guy that brands the outline of Texas on people's foreheads. We weren't in WWII, but we're sure that wasn't really a thing people did. Anyway, we reckon this could actually be quite good. *Could*.

THE BEST OF THE REST...



PROTOTYPE 2



PUBLISHER: Activision **DEVELOPER:** Radical Entertainment **ETA:** April 2012

Do you like New York? Yes. Do you like smashing things into teeny-tiny pieces? Yes. Do you like doing so as a superpowered mutant with the ability to create grotesque tendrils as you slide around skyscrapers and laugh like a crazy bastard? Yes? Then *Prototype 2* is for you. The original was good but not great: too frustrating by half and starring some moody, hoody-wearing emo kid as the lead. We're expecting the same from this – apart from the hoody part. You're now a soldier – but what's wrong with that, eh?



SLY COOPER: THIEVES IN TIME

PUBLISHER: Sony Computer Entertainment **DEVELOPER:** Sanzaru **ETA:** TBC 2012



The last *Sly Cooper* game (that wasn't a compilation) came out in 2005. That was a long time ago. PS3 wasn't even out then. Some of you probably weren't even born. Making up for lost time is *Thieves In Time*, the fourth instalment and the first not to be developed by original dev Sucker Punch, which is now making the *inFamous* games. Sanzaru ported the previous games, however, so expect the same gorgeous cel-shaded platforming and exploration you're used to. Good, eh?



DUST 514



PUBLISHER: CCP Games **DEVELOPER:** CCP Games **ETA:** Early 2012

Now this is properly exciting. A spin-off of popular PC title *EVE Online*, *Dust 514* sees players acting out the orders of the galactic fleet in first-person shooting action. And by first-person shooting action we mean that you get your orders from actual PC players up in their ivory, er, spaceships.

With a constantly updating world, an MMO vibe and also a PSVita release, this could be something truly special. If it's not Ian's going to fly into a fit of rage (although this is a fairly regular occurrence), so, err, do the right thing, yeah, CCP Games?



BINARY DOMAIN

PS3

PUBLISHER: Sega **DEVELOPER:** Yakuza Studio **ETA:** February 2012

Oh, what a silly title. *Binary Domain*? WHAT? It's almost as if the studio (headed up by *Super Monkey Ball* creator Toshihiro Nagoshi) just opened up the dictionary to two random pages and thought 'hey, that's awesome'.

Sadly it didn't – someone actually came up with this name – and the game itself doesn't appear to be any more inspiring. A third-person, squad-based shooter that's all parts *Gears Of War*, *Binary Domain* features your standard sci-fi plotting (Robots! Humans! Cyborgs!) and typical, boring squad mates. So the main character is a square-jawed hero flanked by a lithe female and a hulking great black man. Classic.

Granted, we've not seen too much of this, and certainly not enough to make a full decision on its quality. But it's all just so... generic.



SPEC OPS: THE LINE

PS3

PUBLISHER: Yaeger Development **DEVELOPER:** 2K Games **ETA:** TBC 2012

We'll admit it, we thought that this had been quietly taken back outside and shot. Thankfully it hasn't, as *Spec Ops* has an interesting premise. For those of you that have forgotten, in the 40 or so years since it was announced *Spec Ops* sees a crew of –yes – Special Forces soldiers aiming to suppress a terrorist uprising in the UAE. The only problem is that the whole region is under about 100 foot of sand following a natural disaster.

A whole lot of promises were made with this title, but the setting alone would be enough to have us play through it, as would the allegedly dynamic nature of the sandstorms that can help or hinder your crew. With a storyline ripped from *Heart Of Darkness* (which was, of course, in large part the inspiration for *Apocalypse Now*) and squad-based gameplay, let's just hope 2K hasn't buried this somewhere.

A delicious platter of games in the future!
Except you can't eat them. Unless your teeth
are really sharp and your gums made of steel



I AM ALIVE

PSN

PUBLISHER: Ubisoft **DEVELOPER:** Ubisoft Shanghai **ETA:** TBC 2012

Fittingly Ubisoft's ambitious survival simulator has re-emerged after everyone thought it was dead following a conspicuous silence, and it has undergone a bit of a transformation. Gone is the 'everyman in crisis' scenario, replaced with a tribal, post-apocalyptic vibe that sees players dodging both natural disasters and roaming bandits.

We're slightly disappointed about that to be honest, but *I Am Alive*'s strange journey from full-fledged retail release to downloadable PSN title marks it as one to watch.



SILENT HILL: DOWNPOUR

PS3

PUBLISHER: Konami **DEVELOPER:** Vatra Games **ETA:** February 2012

Uh-oh. *Silent Hill: Downpour* was never going to be an easy ride for newbie developer Vatra Games, but the news that the game had been delayed into 2012 also saw its design director leave because he couldn't face the commute from the US to the Czech Republic. And we thought ours was bad.

Anyway, we're still interested in this, if only because we harbour an irrational need to play another really good *Silent Hill* game that's not a remake of the original. Still, if this fails we'll just get the *Silent Hill HD Collection*: we know that'll be good.



LOLLIPOP CHAINSAW

PS3

PUBLISHER: Warner Bros. **DEVELOPER:** Grasshopper Manufacture **ETA:** March 2012

This might just be the most demented thing we've ever seen. From *Shadows Of The Damned* creator Suda51, *Lollipop Chainsaw* is about a cheerleader killing the *everything* out of zombies in a Californian high school.

More interesting than another third-person shooter, that's for sure, but Suda's games tend to be better experiences than they are games. We hope that the man can finally get both halves of this dynamic on an even kilter, but even if he can't then this is guaranteed to be one of the most interesting games of the year.

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PLAY Reviews

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Playing bad games so you don't have to

Including: King Of Fighters XIII takes us back to the old-school /// Lego Harry Potter's final act /// Awfully average Move titles



86 Tekken Hybrid PS3
 An old game, a demo and a movie. Oh



88 GoldenEye 007: Reloaded PS3
 HD port of Wii reboot of an N64 game



90 Lego Harry Potter: Years 5-7 PS3
 The less things change...

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REVIEW

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Need For Speed: The Run

Hit the road, Jack, and don't you come back...



DETAILS

Publisher
Electronic Arts
Developer
Black Box
Price
£49.99
Players
Players 1 (2-8 online)
Genre
Racing
Age Rating
12
Website
www.needforspeed.com/therun
Twitter
[@ea_actionman](https://twitter.com/ea_actionman)
Facebook
facebook.com/needforspeed

PS3

"A story-based racer? That'll never work," cried everyone ever. And sure enough, it doesn't. But through the gaps between *The Run's* myriad problems, you can just about make out the rough silhouette of a brilliant game. On the whole, though, this latest *Need For Speed* feels like a game torn, one desperate to break off in a bold new direction but one scared about what it might find if it should leave its accessible racer comfort zone – a game too scared to come out in case its parents (as played here by you, its loyal public) don't love it any more. And we share in this conflict. Because while there are moments in *The Run* that make us want to write songs about how bloody awesome they are, such moments will present themselves only to those with the patience to endure what must be one of the most confused and erratic racing games on the market.

The Run is fundamentally flawed from the off, the novel concept far outreaching the technical limitations and gameplay boundaries to which it is forced to adhere. The idea of 200+ racers caning it across the US for a multimillion-dollar prize pot is a great setup, but it falls down based on the scale of the race. Since leaving

slackers to make up several hundred places in the twilight moments of the cross-country race would be horribly unfair, Black Box resorts instead to Plan B – scripting. Rather than allow you to progress through the field at your own pace, *The Run* determines the pace you should be keeping and the stopwatch is all that matters here. You're never actually gaining ground, rather participating in a string of 'come first or fail trying' P2P race events where your

The Run is a game hamstrung by a series of disastrous design decisions

overall position is only ever tied to which race you're currently on and this obvious conceit only gets worse as the race types get mixed up.

When any other racing game challenges you to pass a designated number of opponents, you'd usually assume that there are more overtaking opportunities on the table and that over-qualification would be rewarded somehow. Not here. Here, it's simply code for 'come first in this race', the finite number of challengers in each leg feebly disguised as part of something bigger. It's a ruse that doesn't stand up for long, though shattering the illusion makes it easier to accept

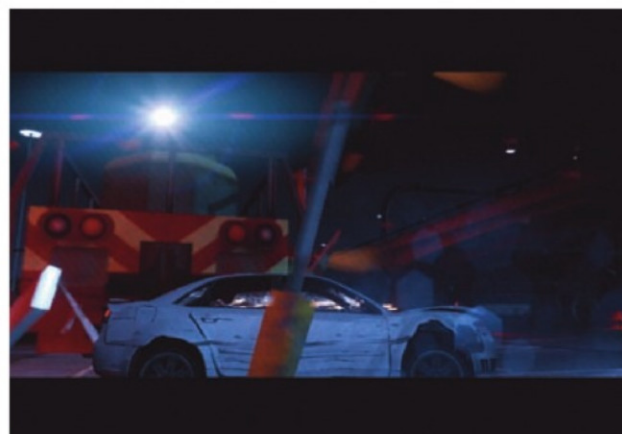
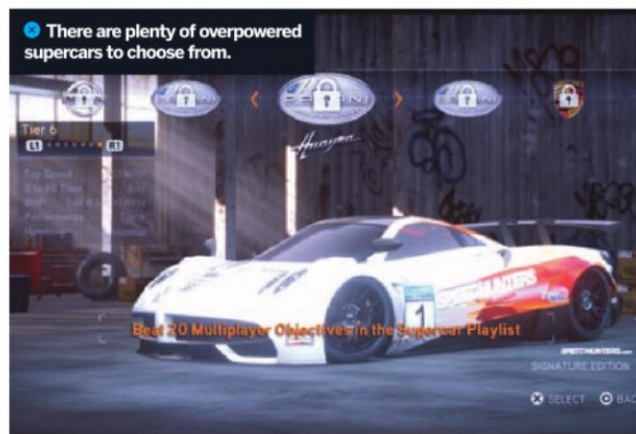
The Run's drawbacks. After accepting that it's only pretending to be the biggest rally game of all time, you'll find it somewhat less difficult to buy into the game's flawed yet interesting concept.

And at times, *The Run* actually threatens to be the most interesting racer in years. 'Event' races punctuate the standard battles for first place and it's these with which Black Box best hints at The Game That Could Have Been. A race down a snowy mountain as you swerve

to avoid avalanches and other debris; outrunning a helicopter gunship through an urban sprawl; ramming, blocking and

outwitting mob cars in a desperate bid to flee a city. Whatever the situation, these experiences are *The Run* at its finest and it's a real shame that more isn't made of them. Hell, there'd have been a whole game there had EA had the balls to make it – a behind-the-wheel *Uncharted*-style thrill ride that leaves conventional racing behind in favour of cinematic thrills and racing not against the pack or the clock but against the odds. No such luck, though. For all these inventive (and often excellent) moments, *The Run* falls back all too often to transparently traditional race objectives and it really suffers for it. Furthermore, there are the quick-time events and ridiculous cut-scenes (starring that guy so hateful that we've intentionally forgotten his name) that splinter the marathon race – these *could* work in the right kind of game (read: the action-heavy variant we just described) but with so many concessions made to the traditional here, they just feel out of place and terribly misjudged.

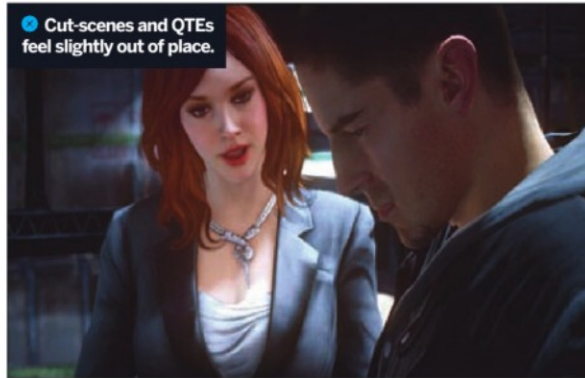
And then there's the handling. Like the rest of the game, this feels somewhat conflicted, too scared to approach the sim-style physics reliance of the *Shift* spin-off line but not quite confident enough to hit the arcade highs of something like *Burnout Paradise*. As a result, it feels a bit messy and takes some getting used



In this series



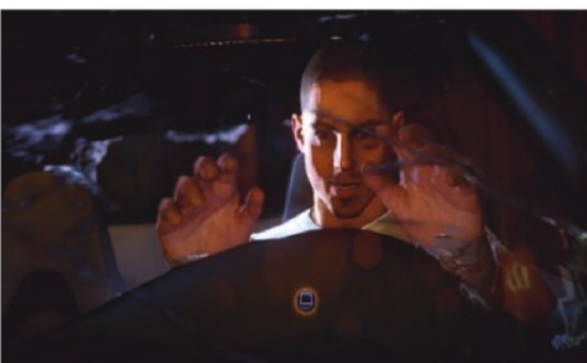
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit Issue 199
Criterion gives the *Need For Speed* franchise a much-needed overhaul. **91%**



OFF-ROAD

It's not all about The Run...

IN ADDITION TO the main single-player mode, there are a bunch of unlockable challenge events for each area that sit outside the fact that the road trip proposed by the game would take closer to two days than two hours to complete. Boosting your driver level before attempting to ace these is pretty much essential (so much is even suggested by one of the loading screens) but they offer plenty of longevity all the same. Autolog works its magic here just as it does in the main mode, offering advice as to which challenges you should attempt in order to troll your friends and warning you when someone wrecks your best time. If you can get on with the handling, you stand to lose hours to self-improvement and showboating here...



One of *The Run's* standout sections, you must avoid avalanches and other debris while taking on rival racers.

to, though those that persist will soon learn that in this grip-centric world, clever use of the handbrake can lead to *OutRun*-style infinidrifts and nailing these feels amazing.

Still, for all its positive elements, *The Run* is a game hamstrung by a series of disastrous design decisions. Changing cars can only be done at on-track petrol stations, while the rest of the pack happily waits for you to size up your new wheels. Leaving the designated course even by centimetres can lead to you being sent back to the last checkpoint. Drafting and turbo-boosting abilities must be acquired by levelling up, this apparent racing god seemingly so green that he doesn't see fit to add a nitrous system before embarking on a Trans-America race. It's a comedy of errors, though it's one with its fair share of over-the-top highlights on

which to reflect once it's all over. But ultimately, *The Run* doesn't know what it wants to be. So, a story-based racer that doesn't really work... who'd have thought it?

Luke Albiges

VERDICT

So long as you can get behind the odd handling and the deceptive setup, *The Run* offers some top-end racing thrills tucked in among some cheap, scripted and downright annoying moments. It's far from the best racer in its own franchise, let alone on the market, but its ideas alone make it something that still has the ability to excite an open-minded audience.

63%





PRESS START BUTTON

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Tekken Hybrid

Rage against the Mishima



It's hard not to feel kind of sorry for *Tekken*. With the likes of *Marvel Vs Capcom 3*, *BlazBlue* and *Street Fighter IV* able to stay very much in the limelight by coming out with new versions or questionably priced DLC pretty much every fortnight and tempting new fighters like *SoulCalibur V*, *Street Fighter X Tekken* and *Virtua Fighter 5: Final Showdown* just around the corner, the Iron Fist tournament in its purest form (read: not overrun by fireball-tossing,

A three-hit multimedia combo that lovingly combines the past, present and future of the series

dragon punching maniacs) has slipped some way down the pecking order of late.

Despite being probably the best in the series so far, *Tekken 6*'s juggle-heavy form of pugilism just didn't seem to pull in the crowds like the franchise used to, so in a bid to remind the world what's so good about *Tekken* beyond the fact that you can make kangaroos punch out bears, Namco Bandai has come up with *Tekken Hybrid* – a three-hit multimedia combo that lovingly combines the past, present and future of the series in a package that no fan will want to be without.

Still, it's an odd package and no mistake. Comprising two installable games and a feature-length Blu-ray movie, *Hybrid* is quite a tricky thing to critique without breaking it down into its component parts, so we'll do exactly

that. First up is an updated version of popular PlayStation 2 brawler *Tekken Tag Tournament*, the largest departure from the usual *Tekken* formula in the sense that the purity of one-on-one bouts is sacrificed in order to offer the same kind of explosive tag team thrills that have made everything from *Dead Or Alive 2* to the recent influx of crossover fighters such a joy to behold. Given that the game is a decade old, it still feels remarkably capable as a beat-'em-up and while those that only got into the series

at or after the fourth game might find that their favourite character hasn't been introduced to the *Tekken* timeline at this point, there's still a decent-sized roster on offer with plenty of styles and faces that later games forgot about for whatever reason. It's a solid HD port as well, with characters looking surprisingly good even if backgrounds really don't, but the fluidity of the combat makes it hard to complain – it's up there with the best upscaling jobs the recent spat of HD remakes has served up, for sure.

In the wake of the six-man lunacy of *Marvel Vs Capcom 3*, however, this early version of a tag team mechanic can feel a little underwhelming. Simple tag throws are pretty basic, meaning that the best stuff is only found when you team up a pair of characters who thematically work together but even then, there's little way to know which moves can be extended beyond a few hours of trial-and-error in the admittedly awesome Practice mode. Certain moves also offer a tag opportunity



DETAILS

Publisher
Namco Bandai
Developer
In-house
Price
£29.99
Players
1-4
Genre
Beat-'em-up
Age Rating
16
Website
www.tekken.namco.com
Twitter
[@namcobandai](https://twitter.com/namcobandai)
Facebook
facebook.com/NamcoBandai

Tekken Tag 2 introduces newcomer JC, a lucha libre wrestler rumoured to be Julia Chang in disguise.



for an extended juggle combo but again, experimentation is the only way to discover these – don't expect anything as useful as *Street Fighter IV*'s Trials or *Virtua Fighter 4 Evolution*'s comprehensive set of training modes. The defensive side of tagging out holds up far better today. A well-timed tag as you hit the ground after being juggled, for instance, leads to an Ukemi Tag, where your partner dashes in to replace the downed fighter and prevent or even interrupt extended combos.

If upscaled history lessons aren't really your thing, chances are the second of the two games will be more to your liking. If you can really call it a game, that is. *Tekken Tag Tournament 2 Prologue* is a bizarre first, effectively a PS3 demo of an arcade game that hasn't even been announced for a home release yet. We can but hope, though, that this inclusion is an indication that the coin-op sequel will be getting a console release, as this is the highlight of the package despite its meagre offerings. With just four characters to choose from (all of whom feature in the *Tekken: Blood Vengeance* movie, the third part of *Hybrid* which we'll get to shortly) and just a brief Arcade mode and local multiplayer on offer, there's really not a great deal on show. But what is there, it must be said, is pretty damn spectacular. *Tekken Tag Tournament 2* builds on the solid foundations of the original but cranks everything to 11 in order to compete with the over-the-top rucks of other popular tag fighters. New features like the Tag Assault and improved tag throws and combos, in tandem with the gorgeous visuals, make each bout a

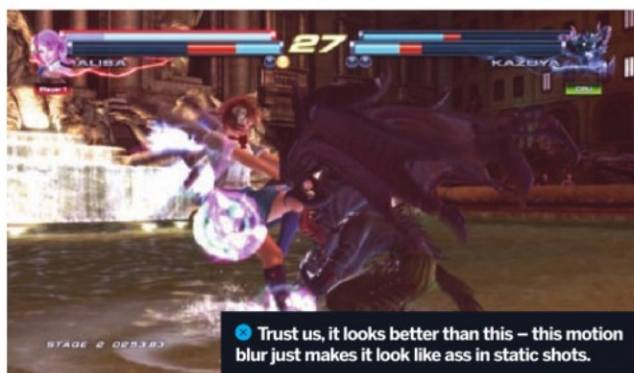




• If your head doubled as a bomb, too right you'd hand it to people and make it blow up.



▶ Tekken Hybrid



• Trust us, it looks better than this – this motion blur just makes it look like ass in static shots.



• Ganryu is still rubbish. Quite how he gets to be in the movie, we'll never know.

spectacle in its own right – if only there was a little more on show.

Last up is *Blood Vengeance*, a lavish and predictably ridiculous 3D CG movie worth watching for its stunning action scenes alone – think of it as a PlayStation 4 tech demo and you'll enjoy it a lot more. It's an oddly focused little story and one that could use a few more cameos but it's entertaining enough in its own right, not to mention essential viewing if you want any chance of understanding Kazuya and Devil Jin's frankly nonsensical *Tag Tournament 2* outfits. With none of its component parts being entirely without merit, *Hybrid* is a great reminder of what *Tekken* has been, is and will be again, though if you're not already a converted *Tekkenite*, this certainly won't be the game to change your mind. Fingers crossed for that *Tag Tournament 2* announcement, then, because that clearly *would* give even the most sceptical of combatants good reason to return to the King Of Iron Fist tournament...

Luke Albiges

VERDICT

A spruced-up classic, a tantalising teaser and a daft but stunning movie make up a triple threat that perfectly celebrates a real fighting legend. Each of the components will appeal to a different audience, though anyone with even the slightest love for *Tekken* will find value in all three parts.

79%



MORE TURKEY, LESS 'CHICKEN!'

A different kind of strikes...

TEKKEN TAG'S SOLID HD remake comes with all of its original features, including the much-loved if slightly stupid *Tekken Bowl* – who doesn't want a bowling game to keep them entertained in-between fights, after all? Each character has a different focus, so Ganryu throws barely controllable rocket balls while Wang struggles to even get the ball all the way down the alley. Best of all, though, are the cheating characters – Jack gets laser targeting for instance, which is useful in so vague a take on bowling...



• *Tekken* is a good fighting game because it has explosions. Don't laugh – we know people that genuinely believe this.





RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

GoldenEye 007: Reloaded

Very much shaken, not stirred



DETAILS

Publisher
Activision
Developer
Eurocom
Price
£49.99
Players
1-16
Genre
FPS
Age Rating
16
Website
www.goldeneye-game.com
Twitter
@goldeneyegame
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facebook.com/GoldenEyeGame



You may not know this, but during the run-up to *GoldenEye 007*'s original release on the Wii, Eurocom was adamant that its classic N64 remake was never, ever going to come to PS3. And yet here we are. Of course, it's not *really* important – we just felt it necessary to point that out.

And as a Wii game, it wasn't awful; but then, as a Wii game, it had minimal competition in the FPS genre. It's hard for PS3 gamers to resist rolling their collective eyes at every new shooter released these days, especially when the PS3 masses are currently embroiled in the multiplayer greatness of *Battlefield 3* or the actually-makes-sense-this-time single-player of *Modern Warfare 3*.

All the corridors of a *Call Of Duty*, but none of the spectacular set pieces or solid gunplay

So as you might expect, *GoldenEye Reloaded* isn't all that. It's not terrible, but nor does it display any real finesse in its design. There are moments where *Reloaded* manages to really utilise the *James Bond*



licence, but these are few and far between – and not nearly enough for a game starring the tuxedoed one. The result is a shooter with all the corridors of a *Call Of Duty*, but none of the spectacular set pieces or solid gunplay.

Then there are *GoldenEye Reloaded*'s stealth segments, which do manage to change the pace a little – even if it is in a way that forces you to dance to its very specific tune. There's a sense of brutality as Bond picks off enemies conveniently facing the opposite direction, while figuring out the perfect route without falling into the unfair (and seemingly haphazard) lines of sight of the patrolling guards is genuinely enjoyable. These can even be disregarded entirely should a more aggressive option be preferred,

though we have already warned you about the weak combat. It's a little bit 'My First Stealth' game, with guards doing the classic stealth game thing of staring at a wall from two feet away and refusing to look anywhere else (maybe they're in shock at how bland the textures are) but still – stealth's in there, it works. Just.

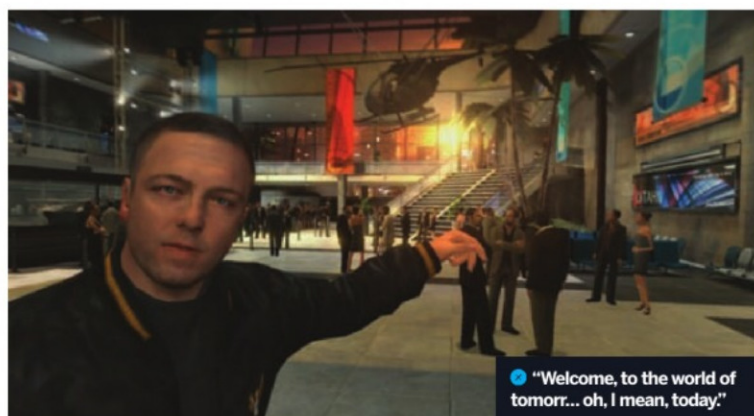
So it's with great ambivalence that we inform you that this *GoldenEye* remake that you've been waiting all these years for should, in fact, be consigned to a bargain bin purchase. It's not awful and we don't hate it, but FPS games are like insects – there are millions of them about but no one cares. Compared to all the other high-quality FPS games already available to a PS3 gamer, *GoldenEye 007: Reloaded* is a difficult one to recommend.

Adam Barnes

VERDICT

If nostalgia's enough to sell a game to you, then this is likely a GOTY contender. Back on Planet Sensible, however, *GoldenEye Reloaded* is disappointingly outmatched by most other shooters on PS3. Even Bond-ophiles will find it lacking in the flair of the franchise.

63%

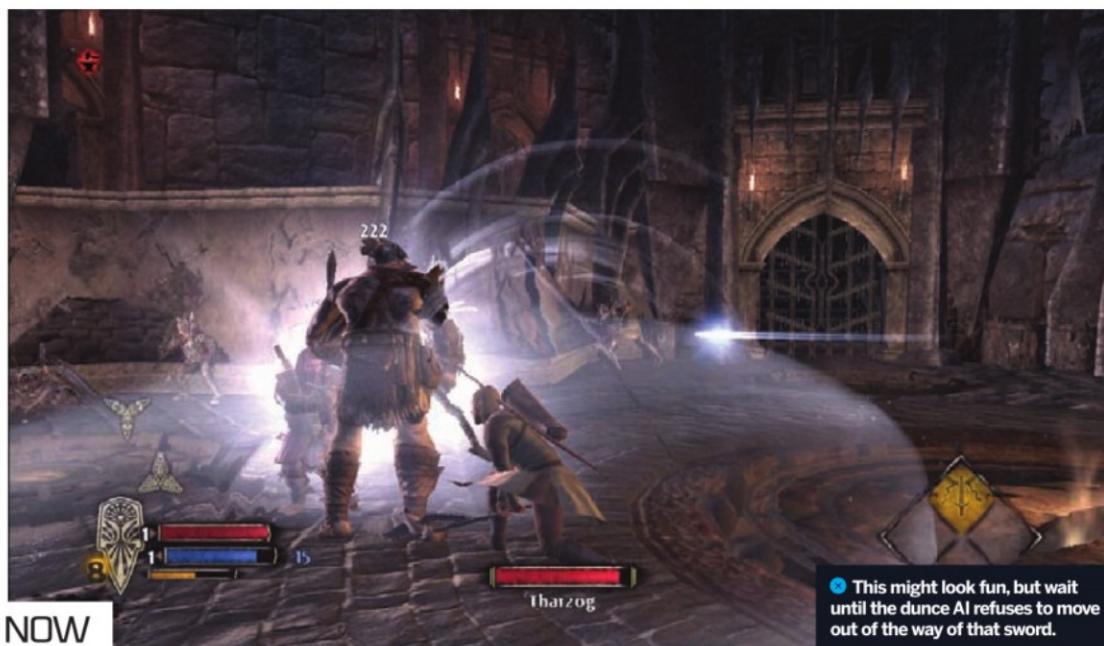


"Welcome, to the world of tomorrow... oh, I mean, today."

Or you could try



Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 3 Issue 212
The same, but actually pretty good in both single-player and multiplayer. 88%



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW



DETAILS

Publisher
Warner Bros.
Developer
Snowblind
Price
£44.99
Players
1-3
Genre
Action RPG
Age Rating
18
Website
warinthenorth.com
Twitter
@warinthenorth
Facebook
facebook.com/lotrwitn

The Lord Of The Rings: War In The North

Another Tolkien effort

PS3 Released little more than two weeks after *Skyrim*, we can only assume that the suits at Warner Bros. decided they wanted to get in on some that *Skyrim* hype. To catch some players that had had their fill of Tamriel and wanted to return, as it were, to the source.

If true this is a miscalculation: people are still playing *Skyrim*, and even if they weren't they wouldn't be interested in this, quite possibly the most boring *Lord Of The Rings*-

related media since the second and third films sighed their way onto cinema screens with run-times in the light years. There are *Lord Of The Rings* lunchboxes more entertaining than this, if only because they might have food inside. (As far as we're aware there's no special edition of *War In The North* that offers this. If this does exist, however, then add another 10% to the score).

Running parallel to the trilogy, you and up to two other friends can live out all your *Rings* fantasies by helping to shape the destiny of the One Ring by, err, talking to Aragorn a bit and then heading out for some of the most repetitive combat since *Golden Axe*. Playing as either a Ranger, a mage or a dwarf, you'll hit things, cast spells, loot stuff, hit things, upgrade your character, hit things, talk to people, hit things, hit things and hit things.

Granted, 'hitting things' is actually pretty fun, for a while. There's a critical hit mechanic which appears after weakening foes that sees limbs and even heads removed, and the strikes themselves feel like they're really connecting.

However, this is pretty much all the game has to offer as it quickly descends into rote hack-and-slashing through tedious, telegraphed killrooms that ask you to eviscerate everything before you can continue. There's no real variety to any of the combat, with special abilities requiring a power meter that depletes too quickly, and after the initial thrill of combat fades you're left with hours of identical slashing, poor stage design and worse partner AI. (Playing with friends obviously solves this problem, but the others persist.)

As for the role-playing elements of the game: forget it, this is an action game with some small RPG trappings and very little else.



This loading screen crops up every time you go into the options menu. Sigh.



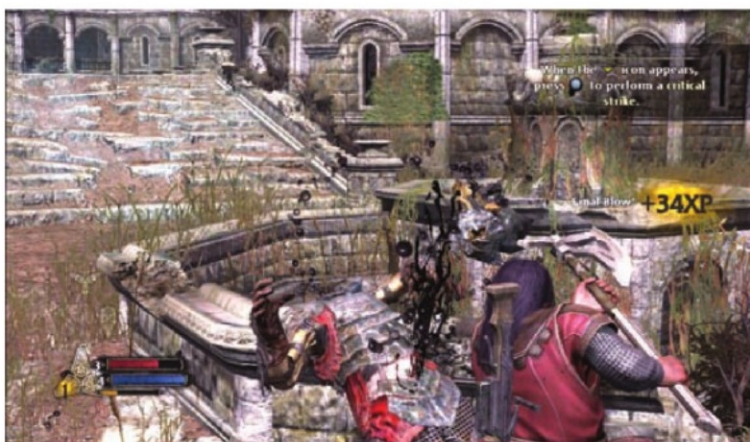
Sure, you can talk to people, and you even have a dialogue wheel, but it doesn't seem to matter what you say or when. Another disappointing entry into the franchise then. Is anyone really surprised?

Steve Burns

VERDICT

Another poor effort at replicating the Tolkien universe on console, *War In The North* is a derivative hack-and-slasher which offers nothing new and does nothing old particularly well. Go and buy a *MegaDrive* and *Golden Axe* for the same money: you will probably have more fun.

42%



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Lego Harry Potter: Years 5-7

It's Lego Harry Potter: The Déjà Vu edition



In six short years, one franchise and one franchise alone has defined developer Traveller's Tales. Since it stumbled upon its magical Lego formula in 2005, it's followed the same template ever since, and, if we're honest, it's about time it at least tried to do something new with it.

The biggest issue with *Lego Harry Potter* is the huge sense of déjà vu that hangs over it like the ghostly visage of Voldemort does in the movies. Everything that has made the Lego franchise so massively popular is here in true checklist form, as if Traveller's Tales simply made the game on autopilot.

Co-operative play? Check. Cute, humorous cut-scenes that riff off key scenes from the *Harry Potter* movies? Check. An insane amount of additional extras to collect? Check. Unlockable characters that allow later access to areas of the game that were previously unavailable? Check. Destroying objects and then using the pieces to build new objects? Check.

We could go on, but we're pretty sure you get the picture, as you've been effectively playing variations of this game for the past six years now. *Lego Harry Potter: Years 5-7* is not a bad game, far from it, but it is a game that does little to deviate from past titles in the franchise, or last year's predecessor for that matter.

As its clumsy prefix suggests, Traveller's Tales' sequel follows on directly from *Lego Harry Potter: Years 1-4*, so you're immediately thrust into *Harry Potter And The Order Of The Phoenix*, and are then given *The Half-Blood Prince* and *The Deathly Hallows Part 1* and 2 to complete. All in all you're getting a lot of game for your money, as each movie has been split into six levels for a grand total of 24. And even when you've completed the main story, it won't be the end for many gamers, as a large number of red bricks, yellow bricks, emblems, studs and characters must be completed in order to get the coveted 100% completion rate.



Many characters require specific items before they let you pass.



DETAILS

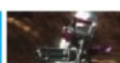
Publisher
Warner Bros.
Developer
Traveller's Tales
Price
£44.99
Players
1-2
Genre
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Age Rating
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We're guessing many players won't get that far, though, as *Lego Harry Potter* simply doesn't have the charm of many of its Lego counterparts. Traveller's Tales has the Lego format down pat, and it shows in *Years 5-7* thanks to the formulaic way in which you progress from one stage to the next. There's no sense of exploration like in *Lego Pirates Of The Caribbean*, no sense of trying out new ideas or gameplay mechanics like was found in *The Clone Wars*; it's just the same old, same old, and if we're honest, it's all getting a little trite and predictable.

This is a real shame, as there's no denying that Traveller's Tales has done a fantastic job in capturing the essence of JK Rowling's world. Locations and characters are instantly recognisable, while many of the key moments from the films are actually enhanced thanks to the madcap humour that has endeared the franchise to so many.

The main pull of *Lego Harry Potter: Years 5-7* remains the many spells that you can use throughout your adventure. All the key spells from the film (and the last game for that matter) become unlocked as you progress, and they allow you to do everything from summoning familiars to putting out fires and capturing light. The gameplay mechanics do improve significantly once all of the spells have been unlocked (a good 12 levels in) but even then the puzzles remain painfully predictable, and you'll simply find yourself going through the motions, just like Traveller's Tales seems to be with this franchise.

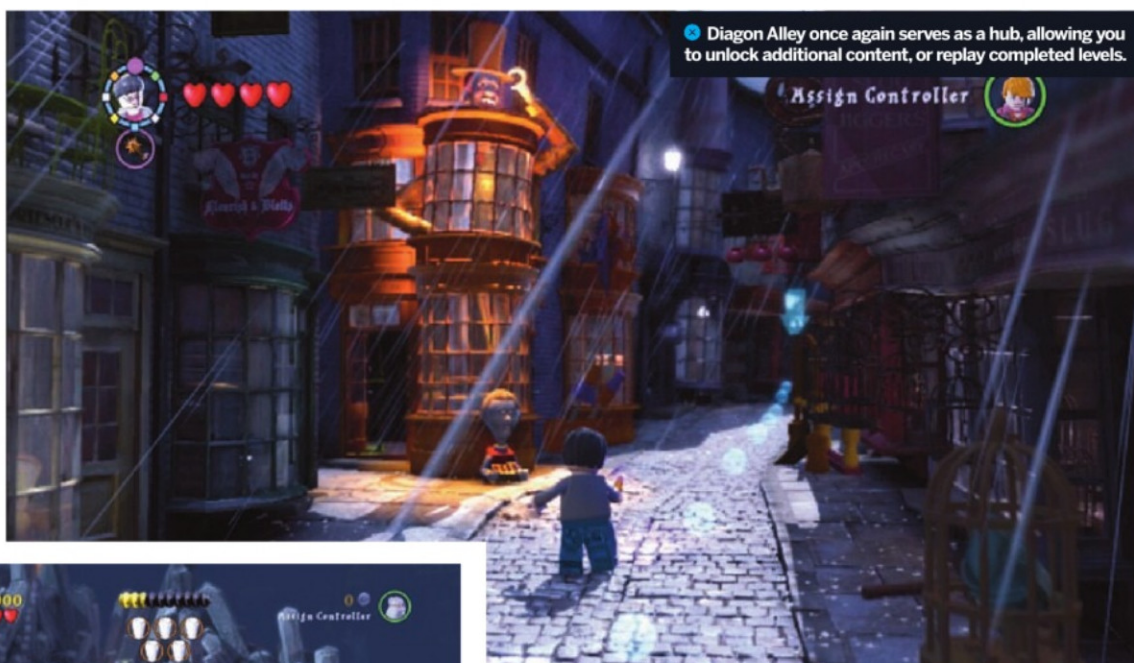
Much of this is due to the fact that *Years 5-7* isn't really aimed at us, but there's no escaping the fact that by targeting its game squarely at the younger player, Traveller's Tales has made a game that's simply far too easy for its own good. There's a far greater emphasis on simple puzzles over general



▶ Lego Harry Potter: Years 5-7



It looks impressive, but the simplistic control scheme will bore all but the youngest of players.



Diagon Alley once again serves as a hub, allowing you to unlock additional content, or replay completed levels.

Assign Controller



SECOND OPINIONS

Two Harry Potter fans speak

IT'S RARE ON Play that we review a game and experience it with the very audience it's aimed at, but that was certainly the case with *Years 5-7*. 11-year-old Emily Jones and six-year-old Alice Jones are both big *Harry Potter* and *Lego* fans and had this to say. "I liked the spells and using the different animals," reveals Alice. "I didn't like the spell battles, they were too hard."

"Having lots of characters and bonus features to unlock is fun," begins Emily. "I did not like the lack of boss battles, compared to past *Lego* games. It's also not as good as *Lego Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures*."



combat, boss encounters are few and far between, and require very little effort to actually beat, while even spell duels are ridiculously easy, requiring little skill or dexterity to best an opponent. Add in the return of the dutiful ghost who signposts the location of the next story trigger, and *Years 5-7* falls far short of the recent releases of *Lego Pirates Of The Caribbean* and *Lego Star Wars III: The Clone Wars*.

It's worth pointing out that *Lego Harry Potter: Years 5-7* is still a fun game that fans of the series will definitely enjoy. It looks and sounds great, has a huge number of unlockables to collect, and effortlessly captures the spirit of the films on which it is based. It's just a pity that for many gamers this won't be enough. Here's hoping that future games in the franchise will show a little more flair and imagination than what's on offer here. The only good news is that the cinematic death of the franchise should ensure we don't have to play another one.

Darran Jones

VERDICT

Lego Harry Potter: Years 5-7 proves that the core *Lego* formula is now too tiring for all but the most ardent of fans. Here's hoping that future *Lego* games try to incorporate new elements into what has now become an extremely formulaic blueprint.

67%



The cut-scenes are up to the usual high standards. Fans will be delighted.



As with past *Lego* games, constantly switching between characters is required to solve certain puzzles.

Assign Controller

Hold ○ next to the orange handle to pull it.





● This man believes wild animals and children are the secret to restoring his carnival. He is an idiot.



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Carnival Island

Do do doodle dodo do do doo do



Publisher Sony Computer Entertainment Developer Santa Monica Studio/Magic Pixel Price £20.99 Players 1-4 Genre Party Age Rating 3 Website uk.playstation.com/carnivalisland/ Twitter @sonyplaystation Facebook facebook.com/PlayStation

Welcome to the Wii, circa a few years ago: inoffensive, shallow, sometimes fun but nothing that will engage over a long period of time. That's *Carnival Island* in a nutshell. It doesn't feel cynical, with a budget price tag and enough care and attention put into the animal characters (and animated cut-scenes, which happen to be quite pretty) that it raises a few smiles. But that doesn't make it very good, unfortunately.

Around 35 games are available, from lobbing rings onto bottles through a number of basketball-related challenges and – best of all – the chance to navigate a flying frog onto a number of lily pads. No, really – that mini-game is actually quite fun. But that's the story here: a handful of half-decent mini-games alongside a fair bit of forgettable nonsense, with the odd bit of utter dirge dropped in for good measure.

It would be remiss, as always, not to point out that Move controls are

accurate and – when the cursor isn't disappearing off the top of the screen thanks to jerky arm motions – responsive. But all you're doing is playing skeeball, shooting targets and other carnival-related distractions. There are better, lighthearted, family-friendly games out there – much as we hate to say so, *Boom Blox* on Wii is all you need for throwing/lobbing games of this type. *Carnival Island* is vaguely passable, ultimately forgettable.

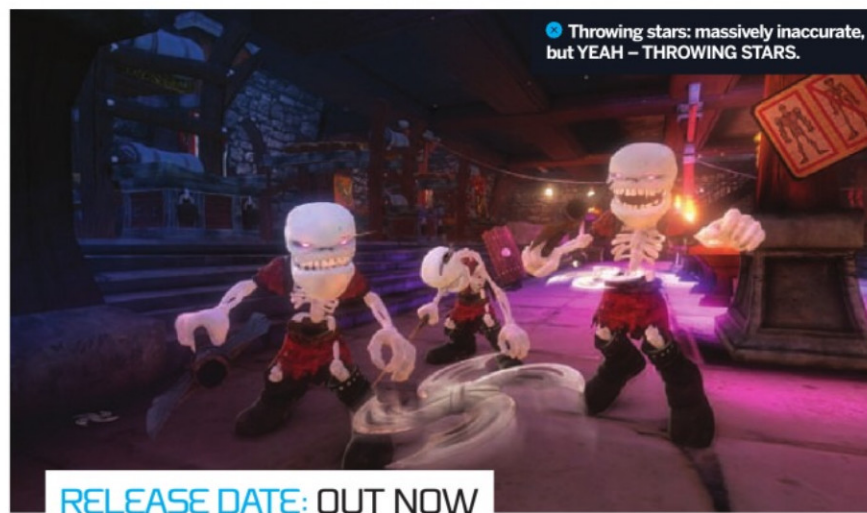
Ian Dransfield

Inoffensive, shallow, sometimes fun but nothing that will engage over a long period of time

VERDICT

You could never get angry at *Carnival Island* for being bad, but you can get thoroughly bored of it for being bland, shallow and resoundingly forgettable. Seen as a vague distraction, it does its job. Seen as anything more, it's a waste of time.

53%



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Medieval Moves

Moves you to a state of bliss...ful unconsciousness



Publisher Sony Computer Entertainment Developer San Diego Studio/Zindagi Games Price £20.99 Players 1-2 Genre Action adventure Age Rating 7 Website www.zindagigames.com Twitter @zindagigames Facebook facebook.com/zindagigames

We're not saying children are idiots, but the only people likely to get lasting enjoyment from *Medieval Moves* are children and idiots. Trot trot, swipe swipe, trot trot, swipe swipe, trot trot, ouch broken wrist. Repeat for too long – ie 'at all' – and you have the game in a nutshell.

Okay, so *Medieval Moves* looks cute enough, Move input is as accurate as we've come to expect from the waggystick and the game is simple enough that the youngsters and families it's aimed at will be able to play it with no worries. We can see that. We register that. That's been taken on board. If you want to buy a game that kids or people who don't normally play games can have a laugh with, you can't go too far wrong for £20. Though *Sports Champions* is a lot better and has more accessible multiplayer.

But *Medieval Moves* is just boring. Shallow. Dull. Monotonous. Trot trot, swipe swipe. There's nothing in it of true novelty value – nothing that makes you sit up and coo at how cool motion technology is or hope for a future where



less dross will come out. Instead you just trot trot, swipe swipe your way through the damnable thing. You trot trot, you swipe swipe, and soon enough you suffer from irreparable brain damage at how bored you've become with life in general.

Ian Dransfield

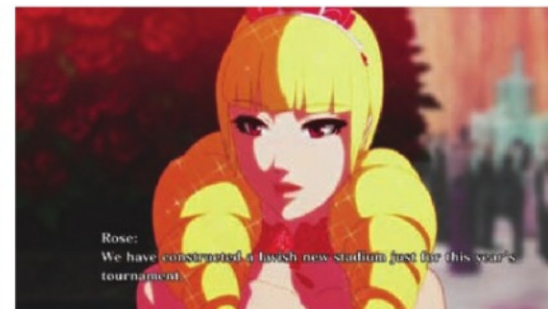
VERDICT

Another showcase for the accuracy of Move. Another showcase for how boring seemingly every idea is thrown at Move. But hey, at least it's priced almost sensibly and younger/casual gamers will be able to play – that's two less things to whine about.

47%



● Bow and arrow control is just like *Sports Champions*. YEAH.



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

The King Of Fighters XIII

Doesn't quite achieve the rank of SS



DETAILS

Publisher
Rising Star Games
Developer
SNK Playmore
Price
£39.99
Players
1-2
Genre
Fighting
Age Rating
12
Website
<http://bit.ly/p1FuSr>
Twitter
@risingstargames
Facebook
facebook.com/risingstargames

PS3 Loath as we are to open a review talking about the last game in a series, it's necessary to do so here to highlight something. While initially we were impressed by *The King Of Fighters XII*, extended play revealed some poor design decisions (the zooming camera being a particularly irksome issue for many) that dragged the experience down. By no means did elements like this make it awful, but it wasn't as great as it initially seemed to be.

That context is necessary to highlight the progress *KOF XIII* has made. It hasn't just been added to – it's been taken away from. That may sound like a negative, but then it shows developer SNK listens to its fanbase and makes changes accordingly (irksome zoom camera: *removed*). These removals of elements that were nothing but bad for the game have left something purer, more welcoming and more like the *KOF* game fans would have hoped for last time around.

Additions come in the form of a few combo modifiers, like drive cancels, and elements like EX super moves – upgrades to standard specials that take one super bar and do far more damage. The sort of thing you expect in any modern fighting game, really, but no less welcome as a

New players will see some success so long as they're not fighting game idiots.



It hasn't just been added to – it's been taken away from

result. The strategic depths *KOF XIII* allows you to work your way through are coupled with a general ethos of simplicity – newcomers to the game, even though it's the 13th entry (plus a fair few more) to the series, won't be left confused or wanting. If you can pull off a quarter-circle forward and hit a button afterwards, you can at least try to hold your own. Just maybe not against the last boss, as he/she/it is a complete and total plum, albeit not to the levels of, say, Seth in *Street Fighter IV* or Azazel in *Tekken 6*.

The King Of Fighters XIII is imperfect; home to some punishing difficulty spikes, a few redundant characters (would the world be a worse place if Ralf didn't exist?) and the ability

to spam yourself silly with certain moves (K's dragon punch-alike). It doesn't push the fighting genre off in interesting or particularly technical new directions, but what it does – classic, pretty straightforward one-on-one brawling – it does well. And it certainly appears to handle itself a hell of a lot better than *KOF XII* did. A step in the right direction by SNK.

Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

After the misstep of last time around it's good to see the *KOF* series back on track. Number 13 won't win many new converts, nor will it surprise veterans of the franchise – but what it does, it does well.

76%





DETAILS

Publisher
THQ
Developer
Volition
Release date
Out now
Price
£49.99
Players
1-2
Genre
Sandbox

Saints Row: The Third

I need a hero!

IS SAINTS ROW: *The Third* the greatest co-op game on PlayStation Network? Maybe. It's certainly the funniest, the most outrageous, and the most spontaneous, what with the fact that anything can happen, at any time, and probably will. Case in point: being keen aviators, **Play** joined a co-op campaign game with the intention of taking to the skies. Our partner – dressed naturally as The Flash – agreed, and off we drove to Wesley Cutter International. On the way we gained the attention of some cops, and then the rival gang that calls the airfield its turf. With gunfire spitting everywhere **Play** and The Flash snuck into an A-10 Tankbuster jet, which was soon destroyed by a roving, RPG-toting gang helicopter.

Which obviously meant war. So **Play** snuck back into the airfield – while The Flash was busy fighting a losing battle on the tarmac – and nicked a passenger plane and flew off to freedom. But **Play** leaves no man behind. Banking round we headed back to the strip, aiming to pick up our fellow Saint. We see his health bar depleting, but not the man himself. Suddenly something's wrong: that health bar

is moving too fast. We gun the afterburner but oh-shit-he's-actually-in-a-chopper.

We crashed head-on, after gracefully ejecting, of course. We landed and, rotating the camera to look behind us, began a pre-programmed victory jig with a stab of right on the D-pad. It's about then, mid-dance, when the flaming wreckage of the helicopter crashed down on top of us, killing our character instantly and making us piss ourselves with laughter.

This little anecdote is just one of about 8 billion ready to get created by those with the imagination to use Volition's ludicrous playground how it was intended. Sure, there's a full-blown co-op campaign to shoot, swear and kill your way through, and we're glad that made it over from the last game. But with a like-minded (ie disturbed) friend and a bit of patience you'll be creating scenarios that even Volition would be proud of: helicopter chicken, fist fights on top of the tallest building in the game (first one to fall to their death loses), hover-jet deathmatches, BASE jumping out of helicopters trying to skyjack other ones – the list goes on and on and on.

Steelport is a superb playground to dick about in, and the various toys and weapons that Volition distributes so freely will keep players interested long after the campaign has come to an end. It's a shame, then, that Volition decided to omit the raucous 12-player lobbies of the last title. If there's one thing that the seemingly infinite possibilities for goofing off seem built for it's a dozen or so maniacs powering around in search of something to blow up, and it's a shame that we won't be seeing that.

Which is a minor gripe but not one to throw yourself off a building in disgust over. *Saints Row: The Third* still offers one of the most rewarding co-op experiences on PS3 or any console, and will provide many of your warmest gaming memories for quite some time.

VERDICT

When a mode that boasts *Saints Row: The Third's* batshit-insane campaign to plough through can be considered secondary to the amount of fun you can have messing around, then you know that you're on to a winner.

★★★★★



Assassin's Creed: Revelations

Back(stab) to basics

Publisher Ubisoft Developer In-house Release date Out now
Price £44.99 Players 4-8 Genre Action

QUITE POSSIBLY THE most refreshing change of pace in the online competitive market since, erm, the last *Assassin's Creed* game, *Revelations* boasts a suite of modes that you'll never play because of your debilitating addiction to the standard Deathmatch mode.

It's nothing like your actual, normal deathmatch, however. Instead of running around with a boomstick killing everything dead and teabagging their corpse, *Revelations* boasts a more nuanced, but no less fun, take on networked murder-kill.

Here you're hunting a specific target, made to look like an NPC, in a level full of identical NPC characters. As such you have to look for signs of human control: erratic movement, climbing on buildings, murdering other people and so on. Sounds fun, right? Now factor in the knowledge that there's also someone stalking *you* at all times and you've got an exhilarating, terrifying and tension-filled game. So impressive – and different – is *Assassin's Creed* multiplayer that it began to draw large crowds in the office as people wanted to see just what the balls the **Play** team was whooping and hollering about.

They weren't disappointed: watching Deathmatch mode is almost as fun as

playing it as everyone attempts to work out both who your target is and who it is that's after you. It's not unusual to be killed just after bumping off your own contract so it's not just a case of finding your mark and executing them: Deathmatch requires real guile and skill to succeed.

As mentioned earlier there are other modes (such as protecting and escorting a VIP to certain points on the map), but their relative complexity detracts from the purity of the experience. When it was first announced that *Assassin's Creed* would have multiplayer, many sighed themselves into a coma thinking that it would be another tacked-on mode to keep the marketing suits happy. Thankfully, it's much more than that: one of the best online modes in any PS3 game, and far more enjoyable than the game that it's attached to.

VERDICT

People may have laughed when Ubisoft announced a multiplayer mode for *Assassin's Creed* but it's turned out to be a great decision. We'd love to see something like this in *Hitman*. Are you listening, IO Interactive? We hope so. ★★★★★

NEED FOR SPEED: THE RUN

Running down a dream

Publisher EA Developer In-house Price £49.99 Players 2-8 Genre Racing

FAR MORE ENTERTAINING than the massive zeppelin of fail that is the single-player mode, *Need For Speed: The Run's* competitive element is a somewhat enjoyable if throwaway experience. Simply put, there's about 15 minutes' worth of solid entertainment here before you decide to go and do something worthwhile with your life, but even then there's annoyances that spoil the experience: leaving the track – say on tight corners to gain an advantage – might see you reset, but smash into a massive rock metres off the tarmac and the



game will carry on. It's frustratingly inconsistent, but there's plenty of cars and unlocks for those who persist.

★★★★★

ULTIMATE MARVEL VS CAPCOM 3

The Ultimate edition? Well, not really, no

Publisher Capcom Developer Capcom Price £24.99 Players 1-2 Genre Fighting

THE MORE THINGS change, the more they stay the same. Capcom decided to go back to the drawing board after releasing *Marvel Vs Capcom 3* to fix various problems, oversights and flaws. Spectator lobbies were brought back. X-Factor was toned down. Wolverine, Wesker and Dante were nerfed. All of this should have made *Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom 3* into a more rounded online experience... and yet having veterans lurking on the server makes it a more difficult game to get into. X-Factor is still overpowered. Everyone still picks Wolverine, Wesker and Dante. The balance is better but it still feels



like an online mode to be fleshed out, with little to tempt anyone bar the hardcore players.

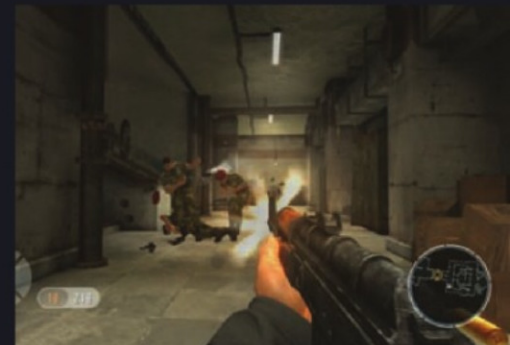
★★★★★

GOLDENEYE 007: RELOADED

Shotguns uber alles

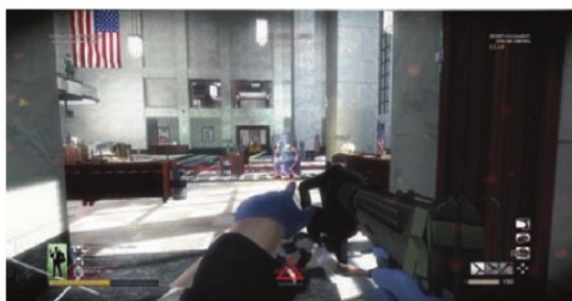
Publisher Activision Developer Eurocom Price £44.99 Players 1-16 Genre FPS

PLAY HAS NEVER fired a shotgun in a real life (at least not officially – sorry Mr Foster, it honestly looked like you were trying to break in). After *GoldenEye 007: Reloaded* multiplayer, we might start. Headshot from distance! Kill up close! Never use another weapon ever again! We'd be angry if shotguns didn't help us fight through the bizarre jerkiness of such a bland-looking game, levels juddering left and right as though you're shooting through a replica set built inside a washing machine. It has



millions of modes but it's hard to care – dull, boring, unexciting, so what.

★★★★★



DETAILS

Publisher
Sony Online
Entertainment
Developer
Overkill Software
Release Date
Out now
Price
£12.99
Players
1-16
Genre
FPS
Website
overkillsoftware.
com
Twitter
@overkill_tm
Facebook
facebook.com/
PAYDAYTheHeist

Payday: The Heist

Sony's own tactical FPS storms in to steal some of MW3's glory

ANYONE WHO HAS visited the PS Store in recent months will know about *Payday*. Hyped to the hilt and available for pre-order, we all saw the sharp-suited robbers in their rubber masks eyeballing us in the pre-release banners and wondered how this FPS would bring originality, team play and run-'n'-gun satisfaction to the masses already chomping at the bit for *MW3*.

Well, if there is any shred of justice in the world then *Payday: The Heist* certainly deserves to run away with the loot because it's brilliant. Clichéd, but brilliant.

We were initially disappointed by the fact that no matter how careful and drilled you are going into the heists, they always explode into a full-scale cops and robbers stand-off situation – we're guessing a faultless snatch and grab wouldn't make for a particularly gripping online experience – and the big battles are so obviously sign-posted that you always know when the tear gas canisters are about to explode through the windows. But you'll soon realise that this is a very balanced and tactical shooter and not just a straight-up mindless spraying exercise. Ammo, for example, is non-existent. You get what you start with, plus the odd meagre top-up

from a downed police officer, and so liberally spraying bullets all over the shop is a route that will only ever ultimately lead you to Hell. You'll need a well-oiled unit of like-minded players to cover your back, not just when your chamber is running on empty, but for when you volunteer to perform the time-consuming task of hacking computers and fiddling with locks, too.

A great soundtrack heightens the tension of the gameplay perfectly and were it not for the odd graphical glitch this game would be a definite classic. The six heists available to play are a varied mix consisting of classic bank vaults to densely populated skyscrapers. Each poses a formidable challenge and requires squeaky tight team play to succeed. So while *Payday* may not be as polished as *MW3*, it presents an altogether tougher challenge, which in turn makes for a more intense and satisfying experience.

VERDICT

A solid FPS that requires canny planning and teamwork to succeed. It's let down by shaky graphics but still most definitely a recommended download.

88%

DETAILS

Publisher
Konami
Developer
Backbone
Entertainment
Release Date
Out now
Price
£7.99
Players
1
Genre
Shoot-'em-up
Website
www.konami.
com/games/
zombie2
Twitter
@Konami
Facebook
www.facebook.
com/konami

Zombie Apocalypse: Never Die Alone

Perhaps a more fitting title would be Never Play Alone...

OUR MEMORIES OF the original *Zombie Apocalypse* game were that it was a frustratingly limited multi-directional shooter with too much repetition and an over-reliance on multiplayer co-op. Now we're not adverse to teaming up for online play, but having to rely on randoms from god-knows where to play in a cohesive and squad-like manner because we couldn't persuade any of our real mates to buy it soon prompted a hasty 'delete' from our hard drives. *Never Die Alone* is the sequel we suspect nobody asked for, but it at least manages to address some of the frustrations that the original chucked at us.

Sticking with the same format as the 2009 original and in keeping with the other zombie culling cult classic of recent times, *Dead Nation*, *Never Die Alone* is a top-down, dual-stick shooter in which you liberally spray bullets around to keep the shambling masses at bay. Played singularly, you can control any member of a four-strong party of survivors by cycling through them at will and enjoying the unique perks that each character offers in terms of weaponry. Each level throws up new

festered adversaries and, because of this, the experience doesn't go prematurely stagnant like the first game. Unfortunately, though, the whole thing is short-lived and you'll finish it quicker than a packet of biscuits.

The longevity here comes thanks to the way you are awarded for performing certain feats in each level – such as not taking any damage and conquering it within a limited time frame – and the bonuses you are bestowed can be used to upgrade the characters. Unfortunately, though, this doesn't work at all well in single-player and you often see your hard-earned rewards evaporate when you die and have to restart the entire level again. This is mostly down to the AI players not utilising their special weapons – at all – making it hard to combat a situation single-handed that requires extreme team firepower.

VERDICT

Good fun in short measures, this is ultimately geared for multiplayer, so unless you have a willing team on standby then it's probably best avoided.

69%



DETAILS

Publisher
Team17
Software Ltd
Developer
In-house
Release Date
Out now
Price
£6.29
Players
1-4
Genre
Sports sim
Website
team17.com
Twitter
@Team17Ltd
Facebook
facebook.com/Team17Software

Worms Crazy Golf

There's no Tiger on this golf course, just a load of sheep and plenty of bad attitude

GIVEN THE WORMS' penchant for anarchy and explosive merriment and how it is at odds with the stuffy, conformist attitudes of traditional golf clubs, it's amazing that the sport and the non-arthropod invertebrate animals have never collided in a game before. But they haven't, because they only just have – and *Worms Crazy Golf* is certainly a sound investment for all PSN gamers after a simple, chilled-out and mildly amusing download to splurge a few hours on.

The game consists of three core courses (a fourth can be downloaded for free), each consisting of 18 holes and each peppered with potential pitfalls to hamper your handicap. As you will soon learn, however, sinking your ball under par is just one of the course requirements as there are also coins to collect and crates to smash – which give you cash to spend and additional items to spend it on. This is where the game scores a bogey because the coins don't follow the natural route of the hole and you'll find yourself having to skilfully play your ball into some

far-out places to collect them all, which is more grind than good. Such objectives aren't compulsory, though, so you can enjoy it as a straightforward golfing game of which it is surprisingly good. The old-school aim and swing method (determined by a dotted line and a power bar) works brilliantly as you attempt to ping your ball through narrow tunnels and off of strategically placed obstacles to gain an advantage.

Sadly, there is no online multiplayer, which this game really needed to extend its limited life span, but there are certainly enough challenges and enjoyment on offer to justify the price tag.

VERDICT

A decent pick-up-and-play golfing game that mixes simple gameplay with a requirement of skill – and then tosses in a stack of dynamite for good measure.

82%



Shoot anything that moves is pretty much the primary objective.



You have earned a trophy. Bat's Your Lot. There are 20 Trophies to earn in this game, all of them Bronze...

DETAILS

Publisher
Cold Beam Games
Developer
In-house
Release Date
Out now
Price
£5.49
Players
1
Genre
Shoot-'em-up
Website
www.coldbeamgames.com
Twitter
@ColdBeamGames
Facebook
http://on.fb.me/vd02zc

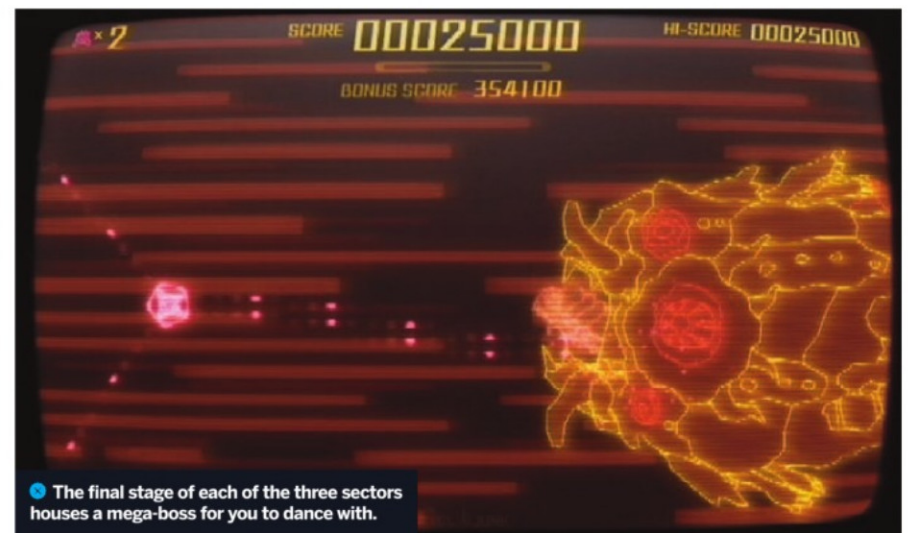
Beat Hazard Ultra

IF YOU LIKE your action intense and a near vertical challenge then *Beat Hazard Ultra* is a pulsating epileptic fit of a game that cleverly generates content based on the MP3 tracks stored on your PS3. It plays much like *Robotron*, with one stick controlling movement and the other 360-degree fire, but you also have an expandable arsenal of special weapons at your disposal and the game liberally scatters power-ups to beef-up your firepower still further. It's simple stuff, but so immensely satisfying that you'll not be able to put it down. The £5.49 price tag is a steal as there are stacks of modes to enjoy and a near-limitless array of challenges and level variants thanks to the way it moulds the stages around your preferred sonics. Basic, but executed to perfection.

79%



Your score is constantly topped-up with an endless stream of power-ups and multipliers.



The final stage of each of the three sectors houses a mega-boss for you to dance with.

DETAILS

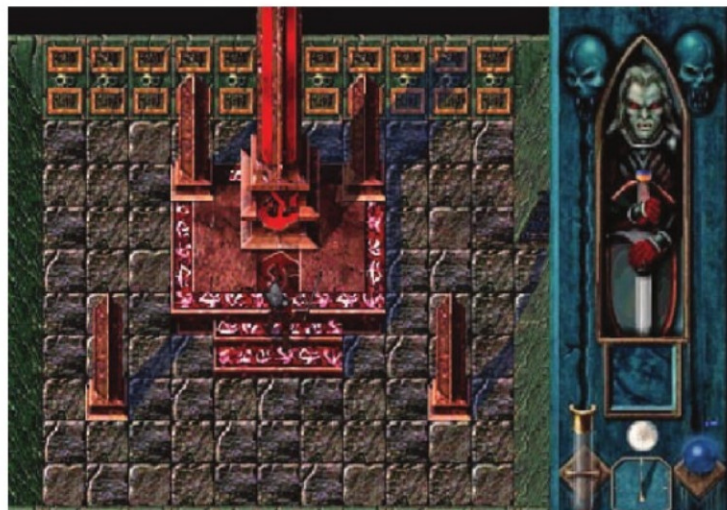
Publisher
Sony
Developer
Q-Games
Release Date
Out now
Price
£6.29
Players
1
Genre
Shoot-'em-up
Website
www.q-games.com
Twitter
@PixelJunkNews
Facebook
facebook.com/FunQGames

PixelJunk SideScroller

TWO THINGS YOU can expect from a *PixelJunk* shoot-'em-up is that (a) it will look like the most garish piece of retro dump since the Steps reunion tour and (b) it will be harder than a cage fighter on Viagra. *SideScroller* is both of these, but it doesn't detract from the appeal of what is a well-designed and fiendishly challenging old-school blast. For your £6.29 you get 13 levels of nerve-shrilling, shooting intensity to manoeuvre your craft through. If the amount of levels on offer seems meagre, then the four difficulty settings compensate because each one totally transforms the ferocity of the challenge. And don't even get us started on the 'Brutal' difficulty.

77%

RETRO ON PSN... They're old but are they any good?



Blood Omen: Legacy Of Kain

• Release date March 1997 • Publisher Crystal Dynamics • Developer Silicon Knights
• Games it influenced Soul Reaver



IT MAKES US sad that there's not been a next-generation *Legacy Of Kain* game. Not because the series has consistently

chucked out epic after bloodstained epic and laughed in the face of people who consider vampire lore to begin and end with nonsense like *Twilight*, but because we really, really miss Simon Templeman's voice acting: has there ever been anyone in videogames with a more villainous tone than the man that plays Kain? Simply, no.

We'll have to console ourselves with the fact that – after far too long a wait for no discernible reason – the game that started it all, *Blood Omen*, has finally made it to the European PSN after languishing on the American equivalent for years. And yeah, graphically it's not all that any more – although the art style is still

real breath of fresh air in the early days of the original PlayStation.

What sets the game apart from other, lesser adventures is that it's hugely atmospheric, and not afraid to take chances with the standard videogame template. You are after all playing as the bad guy, flaying people's skin off, turning into mist and flying around the vast world map as a bat, but *Legacy Of Kain* at least gives you some motivation in this regard. Players don't start the game as an all-powerful vampire king: they start as a human nobleman who picks the wrong tavern to stop for a drink in. After a quick stab in the back from a bunch of assassins Kain is given the chance of resurrection (and revenge) by a calculating Necromancer. The plot twists and turns from there, but put it this way: the canon ending is the bad ending. Yup.

Sadly, we're still waiting on a new *Legacy Of Kain* game for the current consoles, with the last outing being *Defiance* for PS2. The adult storytelling and excellent world-

You'll explore the map, talk to people, turn into a werewolf and travel through time

beautiful – but it's still more than worth the five or so quid it costs to download.

For the uninitiated: players take on the role of the titular Kain, a vengeful vampire overlord who seeks to seize control over the fantasy world of Nosgoth and plunge the world into eternal darkness. Exploring the world from a top-down perspective, *Legacy Of Kain* plays out like a supremely dark version of everyone's favourite game that hasn't changed in forever, *The Legend Of Zelda*. You will explore the map, talk to people, turn into a werewolf and travel through time in a twisting narrative that was a

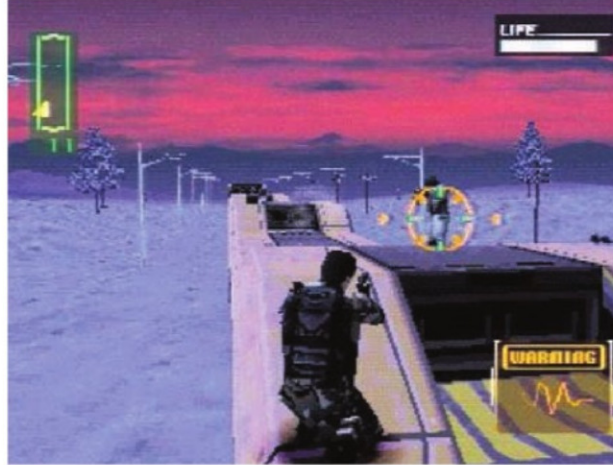
building that define the series really caught on in the early-2000s with the *Soul Reaver* series, but since then the popularity of the franchise has declined. With original dev Silicon Knights wallowing in the depths of nonsense, pumping out terrible *X-Men* games and high-profile, high-cost follies like *Too Human*, maybe now's the time for it to revisit the franchise. Until then, however, we'll have to make do with the PSN re-release, terrible loading times and all.

WHAT WE SAID: Issue 18 • 81%
Be a vampire: top bloody fun.



NEVER COMING TO PSN #2

Once upon a time this seemed interesting. It wasn't.



Chase The Express



- Release date 2000
- Developer Sugar and Rockets

THINK THAT DEAD *Rising* was the first game to make you save in toilets? Wrong-o, friend: *Chase The Express* was doing it a clear six years earlier. Glad

we got that cleared up.

Despite this fact and the mental title – it was renamed to the slightly less silly *Covert Ops: Nuclear Dawn* in the US – *Chase The Express* didn't really have much going for it. A mixture of *Resident Evil*'s cameras and systems (you'll spend most of your time trying to find keys to locked doors, as most special forces operatives are trained to do) and spectacu-bad Steven Seagal sequel *Under Siege 2*,

this was an irritating experience with far too many petty annoyances – chief among them is the fact that security drones will cut you to pieces in seconds, but thanks to the camera you'll probably not be able to see it.

Which is a shame, but not unanticipated: after all, has there ever been a good game which takes place aboard a train? *Resident Evil Zero*, maybe? But then that takes place on a train for about ten minutes. *Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow*? Same. If we had our way, we'd make a train-game that had you avoiding ticket inspectors, *Metal Gear* style. If you were caught you'd have to get into an *L.A. Noire*-style battle of wits. Tell us that wouldn't be excellent. That's right, you can't.



WE COULD HAVE DONE WITHOUT...

Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow

THIS WAS ABSOLUTELY hyped up to the nines when it was first released, but looking back on it now it's difficult to get excited about a game that essentially hates you. The *Splinter Cell* games are known for their outrageous difficulty, but this was beyond the pale: super-smart enemies, limited combat abilities, and the gnawing feeling that maybe wearing a bright green jumper indoors might not have been

the right choice for a stealth mission. The fact that it didn't look as good as the Xbox version was a given, but even in its day this was ugly.

There are some interesting stages but overall there's the feeling that this was a rush job (which it was), a nice little stop-gap before the real sequel, *Splinter Cell Chaos Theory*, hit the shelves.



IDEAS
ACCORDING TO
PLAYSTATION

HEY, HAVE YOU heard that another console maker has had this really good idea? It's called Achievements/rumble/analogue sticks/online play! Let's just pretend they were our ideas, yeah?



RETRO GAMES WE SAID WE WANT TO PLAY AGAIN BUT PROBABLY WON'T



Quake II

AN ABSOLUTE TECHNICAL marvel when it was released on PSone, we still don't quite believe Hammerhead managed to squeeze this onto the console. That said, we'll give this one a miss thanks.



Prince Of Persia: Warrior Within

REMEMBER PRINCE OF *Persia: The Sands of Time*? Remember its glorious, dreamy fairytale vibe? Good, wasn't it? Yes. And then Ubisoft decided to mess everything up by making it all moody and emo. Sigh.



GoldenEye: Rogue Agent

A SEQUEL TO the greatest FPS ever? Err, no. This was a shoddy follow-up trading only on the name, made all the more heinous by the way EA tried to tie it in: the main character had – wait for it – A GOLDEN EYE. Thanks, marketing.



FIFA 2000-06

BECAUSE, WHEN YOU get down to it, none of these were good for anything other than letting everyone know that PES was miles, miles better. We miss the old days so much.

BATTLEFIELD 3: THE GUIDE

TAKE A TRIP TO PLAY'S BF3 BOOT CAMP

GENERAL TACTICS

There are a number of basic techniques to follow and apply in *BF3* – some obvious, some less so, but all useful. Pay attention:



01 SPOT. Use **[F]** to spot enemy units. The rest of your team will be able to see them, you will get a points bonus if they are taken out.



02 USE AID ITEMS. If you're assault, don't be afraid to lob medpacks around. Support, don't forget ammo. Team-mates need it, and you get point boosts.



03 SPRINT. Wherever possible, always sprint through open areas to avoid being picked off. Safety comes through being light of foot.



04 IT'S A TEAM GAME. *BF3* is a game that rewards working together, both through extra points and through the fact you will win if you work as a team.



05 USE PRONE. Holding the **[R]** button in will become second nature soon enough and it will save your life. Your game-life, that is.



06 FOLLOW THE TRAIL. Smoke/vapour trails will show you where you're being shot at from. Follow them to find your would-be killer.



07 PARACHUTE. You always have access to your trusty parachute, which can be activated by pressing the **[X]** button, though you will need to be at a decent height for it to deploy properly. Don't be afraid to abandon aircraft at high altitude.



08 COMMUNICATE WITH TEAM-MATES. A headset is worth splashing some cash on so you can actually say what you want to say to comrades ("he's over there, kill him now"), but, don't worry, you won't find that you're totally stuck without one.



09 SQUAD UP. Always accept the option to form a squad when the game is loading up, even if you have no intention of working together. You're far more likely to get extra points that way, from squad spawns/heals/resupplies, leading to faster levelling up.

EXPERIENCING XP

Naturally, weapon unlocks and upgrades will make you a more effective online killing machine – but they're not the be-all, end-all. Defibrillators are essential and C4 is a nice perk for support, but these are swift, early unlocks. Even if you're just coasting by, not making a huge dent on your XP in every match, you will still remain effective even with the early guns and shorter-ranged scopes.

GRENADES: A PRIMER

Grenades are very useful in *Battlefield 3*, but you don't get very many so there's no spamming here. Instead, use them effectively like in these sorts of situations



01 TAKE AIM: First of all, aim your grenade at any building that houses an enemy.



02 PICK YOUR MOMENT: Wait at the door in case the enemy attempts to make a run for it.



03 ENJOY: Laugh as most of the building explodes, either killing the enemy or destroying their cover.

VEHICLES

Battlefield 3 has a strong emphasis on vehicle-based combat, so it's vital you learn a few pertinent factors when it comes to the bewheeled/winged/tracked war machines:



01 TANKS AREN'T INVINCIBLE. Mines, RPGs, air strikes, C4 – you are vulnerable in these hunks of metal. Remember this: don't just drive out into the open or take the most obvious, straightforward route.



02 DRIVE TOGETHER. A jeep is fine to traverse large maps with, but if you're alone that's all you can do. Get your squad-mates in the car and you have a mobile killing device. Also: a road trip.



03 BEING SHOT AT ISN'T ALWAYS BAD. In the language of *Battlefield 3*, team-mates shooting at your vehicle means 'let us ride', not 'we want you to die now'. Pay attention.



04 AIRCRAFT ARE DIFFICULT. Helicopters and jets aren't pick-up-and-fly, and obvious as it seems need to be learned – mastered – before you can be successful in them. Stick with them and you can be one of the most effective people in a match. The right stick is your best friend when flying.



05 YOU'RE ALWAYS EFFECTIVE. Even without heavy weapons you can have an effect against tanks and their chums. Spotting, grenading, drawing their fire – contribute to your team's efforts to take out the big guns.



REMEMBER WHAT YOU'RE PLAYING

That's a patronising header, true, but *Battlefield 3* is a different game to most other online shooters and it needs to be played accordingly. For example:



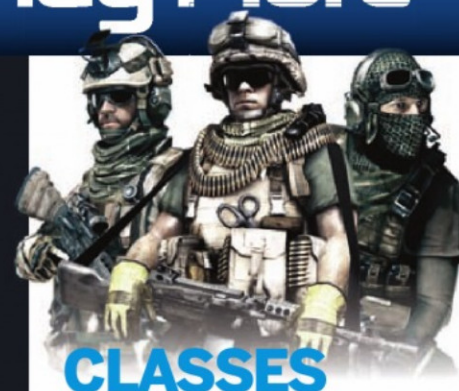
01 OBJECTIVES MATTER. In conquest, you *need* to capture flags – so make sure you do that. In rush, you *have* to pay attention to the M-COM stations you are attacking or defending. Don't just rely on killing as many of the opposition as possible.



02 DESTROY. The Frostbite 2 technology thing is more of a marketing trumpet for EA to blast, but that doesn't mean it isn't useful in a game. Never forget you can destroy the cover that irritating sniper is hiding in, or make a new hole to drive your tank through.



03 KILL/DEATH DOESN'T ALWAYS MATTER. We've placed at the top of leaderboards by not killing a single soul. Points aren't just awarded for being first to shoot or the most accurate – you can and will be rewarded for contributing to your team's success.



CLASSES

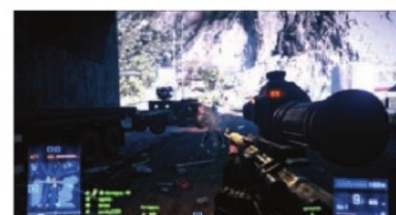
Four classes are available in *Battlefield 3*, but there's a wealth of options and variety in such a small number – and remember, you can always switch kits with downed troops in the field. But who should you choose? Read on:



ASSAULT: The most standard of the classes, machine guns, zig-zag strafing and close-to-mid range combat are the name of the game here. But never forget medpacks, and try to unlock defibrillators as fast as possible for thousands of extra points per round.



ENGINEER: Without engineers on your team, you will not succeed. Their rocket launchers are brilliant to take out enemy cover and vehicles, and their ability to repair friendly vehicles can turn a tank spree into an *unstoppable* tank spree.



RECON: Not merely the scumbag snipers from *Battlefield* games past, the recon class has been updated to have a mobile spawn point. This is one of the best and most useful unlocks in the whole game, allowing team-mates to spawn wherever it is dropped.



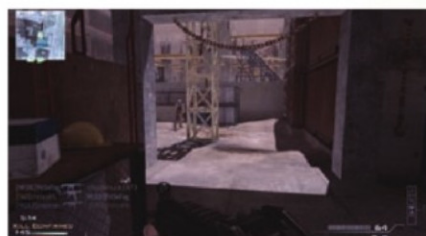
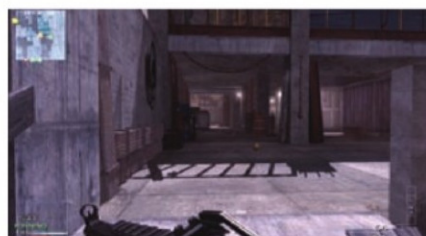
SUPPORT: The addition of suppressing fire mechanics has seen support become more than just a class with a big machine gun. Lay down actual, proper supporting fire and watch as the support assist points rack up – and never forget to hand out as many ammo packs as you can.

MODERN WARFARE 3: THE GUIDE

Tired of getting stomped? Noob-tube getting you down? Well snap out of it, pansy. There's a war to win, and we've got the strategy...

★ GENERAL TACTICS ★

1: You bloody fools, stop sprinting around. Not only does it make you look ridiculous, but it also scatters your team, making them – and you – easy pickings. There are times to sprint: between cover, closing the distance on your squad-mates. There are times not to sprint: clearing rooms being one of them.



2: Use a loadout that actually suits your map. Running-and-gunning with an LMG on Dome is tantamount to saying, 'I deserve to die. Kill me now, man with silenced UMP.'

3: If you're playing on your own, check out the guy that's the top of your team's leaderboard, then stick to him like glue. Most public games are filled with lone wolves dementedly running around. With just two squad members powering around the map together you're more than likely to rack up the kills.



4: The noob-tube is for swines who think 'skill' is a typo. Anyone choosing to use it is a disgrace to their families and should be shot. We're not joking.

5: Keep on getting shot in the back? Keep an eye on your minimap: the bad guys are pretty much going to be spawning on the opposite side from the majority of your team. Use this to your advantage: pull up the full map when you get a UAV to see where the opposition are moving to and to successfully help you to 'turn' the map to your advantage.



GO PRO

One of the major new additions to *Modern Warfare 3* is that your weapons now rank up as well. Successfully levelling your weapon to a certain number will unlock Proficiencies: mini perks that can give you the edge. These Proficiencies differ by weapon class, but spend time tweaking them to your playstyle: putting Range on your SMG or Shotgun will increase your potential killing range by 25%, and putting Kick on an AR will give you the edge in firefights.

HIDDEN & DANGEROUS

Good news: the nuke has gone. Bad news: there's still a 25 kill reward. Good news: it doesn't end the match. Bad news: it kills everyone else on the other team. Good news: you can't chain killstreaks to get it, you need to go gun on gun. The Mother Of All Bombs is a nice bonus for anyone that has the skill to get it, so be on the lookout for any players on the other team hovering around the 23-24 and 0 kills mark.

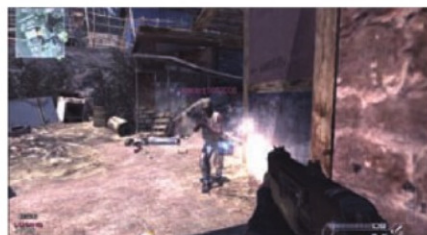
★ PERKS ★

As ever, Infinity Ward has tweaked the perks this time around to balance the game: there's no more of that One Man Army guff floating around here, nor Commando. On a related note: if you used those perks before, then you're no friend of ours. Balance your perks to your weapon loadout and map rotation. Favourites around the **Play** office include the following:



THE GHOST: Blind Eye, Assassin, Sitrep, Silenced UMP, EMP grenades. With this you're undetectable by pretty much anything other than line of sight, especially if you have the Pro versions. Use this on maps like Dome and you'll be laughing.

THE ASSAULTER: Sleight of Hand, Quickdraw, Stalker, SCAR-L with grenade launcher, frag grenades. This build will see you able to look down the sight quicker, reload faster and move at full speed when aiming down the sight. Simply put this in a glorious room-clearing build which, when combined with smoke grenades



and Stalker Pro (which gives Claymores, IMS and Betty's a two-second delay before firing) is deadly.

THE RUN-N-GUNNER: Extreme Conditioning, Hardline, Steady Aim, PP90M1, MP9, Semtex, flashbang. With this you're an ultra-mobile, early killstreak gathering, accurate hip-firing badass. The UMP is a great weapon for short to mid-range use (longer ranges not so much), and if you get caught in a tight spot the MP9 is a fantastic personal defence weapon. Use this if you're always on the run and the thought of looking down the sight gives you the fear.

★ EQUIPMENT ★

Also new to *Modern Warfare 3* are several types of equipment that can be absolutely vital to your success. Most *Call Of Duty* players focus on their primary and lethal slots when building a class, but sometimes it's the equipment that makes all the difference. Like these little beauties...



TROPHY SYSTEM: The answer to so many prayers in the *Call Of Duty* community, this bit of kit deflects up to two incoming enemy projectiles. Everything from frag grenades to AC-130 cannon rounds will be battled away with this bad boy, making controlling objective points far easier than before.

BOUNCING BETTY: Fulfilling the same purpose as a Claymore, the Bouncing Betty has one important difference: its explosion covers a full 360-degree area rather than a frontal arc. As it's

less focused than the Claymore it's less powerful, but mitigating factors include that it's more difficult to see. Consider this in open objective-based maps.

EMP GRENADE: Another new addition to the *COD* family, the EMP grenade is a powerful tool when used correctly. Once detonated it lasts for ten seconds, has a 12-metre radius and disables all enemy equipment and HUD for the duration. It can also down low-flying pointstreaks such as the Pave Low and Escort Airdrop. Not a lot of people use this online... yet.



★ POINTSTREAKS ★

There's been a fundamental change in the way that killstreaks are metered out in *Modern Warfare 3*. Now streaks can be chained even if you die (via the Support pointstreak) or you can choose to alternately acquire more perks for your build when you successfully kill opponents (the Specialist package). You can also acquire points by doing non-lethal work like acquiring Domination nodes. Bog-standard Assault streaks still exist, as sadly do killstreak-chains, leading to fools getting to five kills and waiting for the Predator/Chopper/Reaper to do the rest. Boo.

ANYWAY, HERE ARE A FEW FAVOURITES:

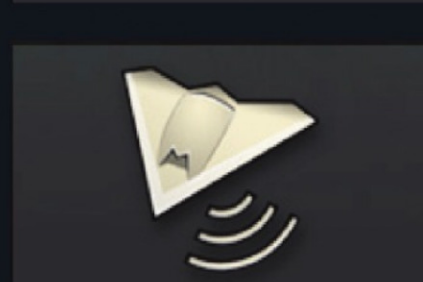
PREDATOR MISSILE (5 POINTS, ASSAULT): Almost a guaranteed kill if you can get it, this is a great leg up towards the higher assault kills. Simply wait for enemies to group together – as they will naturally in objective gametypes – and lower the boom.



IMS (5 POINTS, ASSAULT): Like a Claymore on steroids, this bad boy fires out four heat-seeking missiles when tripped. Great for objective modes, better for sneakily deploying in Team Deathmatch.

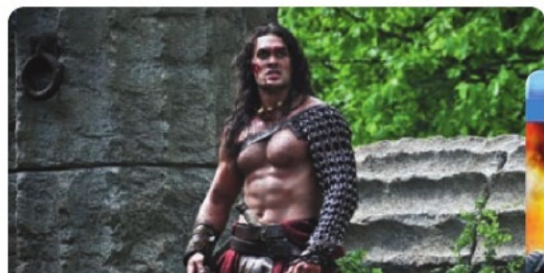


ADVANCED UAV (12 POINTS, SUPPORT): Exactly the same as *Black Ops*' Blackbird reward, this pointstreak gives you perfect enemy location on the minimap, right down to the direction they're facing. Invaluable for a support build in objective gametypes. Interestingly, if your team deploys three UAVs in one cycle they'll get the effect of the A-UAV.



JUGGERNAUT RECON (18 POINTS, SUPPORT): Juggernaut armour, a riot shield and a portable radar. You're nearly invincible with this thing on, and also make the perfect distraction on either offence or defence. Best of all: it's a Support streak, meaning that if you're a reasonably good player you'll have this in no time at all.





Conan The Barbarian

PRICE: £14.99 **DIRECTOR:** Marcus Nispel
STARRING: Jason Momoa, Stephen Lang, Rachel Nichols

REMAKES THESE DAYS are all about taking the original and making it sleeker, cooler and sexier. However, replacing Arnie with the buff-but-not-huge Jason Momoa for this reimagining of *Conan* just feels wrong – he's like a twig in comparison, lacking the substantial muscularity that made Schwarzenegger a star. It's a problem felt throughout the film

– none of the magic that made the original *Conan* movie so watchable is apparent, and the script and acting are cheesy in a *Pirates Of The Caribbean* kind of way rather than a 'crap Eighties movie' kind of way. For our fix of swords and sorcery we'd rather have spent the overlong two hours run time of *Conan* polishing off the Thieves' Guild quests in *Skyrim*.

RATING: ★★☆☆☆



The Guard

PRICE: £15.99 **DIRECTOR:** John Michael McDonagh **STARRING:** Brendan Gleeson, Don Cheadle, Mark Strong

BRENDAN GLEESON PUT in a great performance as *In Bruges*' put-upon hitman Ken, so we were interested to see him starring in *The Guard*, another Irish crime comedy that just so happens to be helmed by the *In Bruges* director's brother. Gleeson is Sergeant Gerry Boyle, an unorthodox Irish Garda with a penchant for class-A drugs and prostitutes who's paired with by-the-book FBI agent

Wendell Everett (Don Cheadle). It's not as funny a partnership as *In Bruges*' Colin Farrell and Gleeson, thanks to a script that's sharp and witty but inconsistent, with good laughs disappearing almost entirely in the final quarter. Gleeson is fantastic as the foul-mouthed Boyle, though – if he got his own TV series we'd be sure to tune in every week.

RATING: ★★★★★



Killer Elite

PRICE: £17.49 **DIRECTOR:** Gary McKendry **STARRING:** Jason Statham, Clive Owen, Robert De Niro

KILLER ELITE SEES Jason Statham contracted to kill three former SAS agents for a wealthy sheikh looking for revenge. Britain's other hardest man, Clive Owen, is on his trail, attempting to stop him. The plot is more complex than we've come to expect from a Statham movie, with plenty of intrigue and backstabbing occurring around the plentiful violence and action scenes – but don't

get us wrong, there's still a scene in which Statham beats someone up while tied to a chair. However, in its aspirations to be both an over-the-top Statham action flick and also a smart-witted political thriller it ends up being neither – just a so-so action flick with delusions of grandeur. That Owen/Statham fight scene is still pretty damn cool, though.

RATING: ★★★★★



● Daniel Craig's stony and unmoving facial features are perfectly suited to the Western.

Cowboys & Aliens

Or, more aptly, James Bond, Indiana Jones & some aliens

PSN PRICE: £15.99 **DIRECTOR:** Jon Favreau **STARRING:** Daniel Craig, Harrison Ford, Olivia Wilde



It's all there in the title – a deceptively simple idea that pairs two classic movie genres to result in something unique. We've seen futuristic technology sneak its way into Westerns in

the past in the awful *Wild Wild West* and no better *Jonah Hex*, but in this instance the concept is taken one step further. It's not just steampunk spiders and miniguns; here the sweat-smeared grittiness of the classic Western sits alongside the clean, sleek design of contemporary sci-fi, with CGI spaceships and predatory aliens invading an 1875 Arizona landscape. It sounds like a concept Jon Favreau and the other big names behind the project could have had a lot of fun with.

Unfortunately, they don't. Kicking off with escaped outlaw Jake Lonergan (Daniel Craig) waking up in the middle of the desert with no memory and a strange manacle attached to his wrist, *Cowboys & Aliens* shows early promise. Craig, as ever, pulls off the quiet, brutal and basically bloody hard role with ease, taking out a group of cowboys who intend to rob him with the deadly, blunt force of Bond. Harrison Ford, who shows up some time later as cantankerous old cattle magnate Woodrow Dolarhyde, is less convincing, but some of the *Indiana Jones* charm begins to seep in towards the film's end.

The problem is, however, that the Western elements of the film work far better than the science-fiction parts. The aliens show up and the film somehow manages to become more boring, not to mention more ridiculous. Why are the aliens here? They want gold. Why? Who knows.

The scenes of UFOs abducting cowboys and cowgirls with their intergalactic lassoes get old fast; the aliens aren't imaginatively designed; and the final battle is protracted and dull. There is one great scene in which Daniel Craig battles it out with a bunch of flying saucers on an expansive prairie, but it's the only set piece that really excites.

Part of the problem is that *Cowboys & Aliens*, for a film with such a silly concept, takes itself far too seriously. If Robert Downey Jr was in the role of Lonergan, as originally intended, this could have been a far more enjoyable and entertaining film. But as it is *Cowboys & Aliens*, like Craig's stony and unmoving facial features, is simply too grim and serious for such a ridiculous story. A bit more of *Iron Man*'s levity would have worked wonders.

VERDICT

If the script was more willing to poke fun at itself rather than play it straight, *Cowboys & Aliens* would be far more recommendable. In leaving out jokes in a film that features gold prospectin' extraterrestrials, the entire concept itself becomes the unintended joke.

RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Movies that should be videogames



Commando

PRETTY MUCH ANY Schwarzenegger movie could be made into a videogame – and yes, that includes *Junior*.

We'd rather play one based on *Commando*, though, not because it features tons of crap being blown up or Arnie firing an M202 FLASH rocket launcher, but because it's got a bad guy who looks like an S&M fanatic whose

clothes don't fit; a terrible soundtrack composed on steel drums; and lines like, "I eat Green Berets for breakfast."

Commando is such an entertainingly awful film that it's almost beautiful – the very pinnacle of dire Eighties action movie trash but brilliant for that reason.

We doubt any developer in the world has the skill to re-create such dazzling

stupidity within the confines of a videogame – like Wheatley in *Portal 2* producing something so utterly inane would require the greatest and most brilliant minds of a generation working together for years – but we'd like to see one try anyway. Like they say, it's better to comman-do than comman-don't... or something.

Terrible videogame movie of the month

Prince Of Persia: The Sands Of Time

WHEN WE FIRST saw shots appear of *Prince Of Persia: The Sands Of Time* it seemed for a moment that, for once, we might actually have been getting a well-produced and thoughtfully created videogame movie. We weren't. We were getting a tedious, over-complicated and poorly acted CGI-fest that made *Pirates Of The Caribbean* look like *The Godfather: Part II*.



Classic Blu-ray

Fantastic Blu-rays you need to have in your collection

#12 The Matrix

Price: £9.99 **Director:** Andy Wachowski, Lana Wachowski **Starring:** Keanu Reeves, Laurence Fishburne, Carrie-Anne Moss



WE DON'T NEED to tell you about how influential *The Matrix* was on modern cinema. Every action film released in the years following the first part of Neo's journey pinched some element or other

from it, with bullet time becoming as common in movies as the Wilhelm Scream. The reason why is simple; *The Matrix* was f***king cool. The music, the fashion, the weapons – if you dressed like Neo out on the street today you'd likely be laughed back inside the house, but back in 1999 it was geek chic at its finest. *The Matrix* was clever, imaginative and sleek. Pity its creators went and undid all their hard work in the following two films.



Movie worlds we'd love to explore in videogames

Now we've spent almost half our life in *Skyrim*, these are the places we want to visit next



Arrakis – Dune

WE KNOW WHAT you're thinking. Yes, it *is* just a big desert, but someone like Bethesda could surely create a brilliant world from it.



Neo-Tokyo – Akira

WITH ITS FLUORESCENT spires and multi-levelled infrastructure, *Akira*'s Neo-Tokyo would make for a fantastic videogame setting.



The Afterlife – What Dreams May Come

BECAUSE IT JUST looks so *nice* there.



Beyond The Infinite – 2001: A Space Odyssey

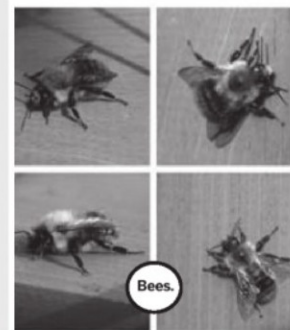
LOS SANTOS? Forget it. We want to see a game that takes us beyond the edge of time and space itself. Perhaps that's what they're planning for *GTA VI*.

PLAYLIST

If you want to know what a game scored then these pages are for you

GAME UNDER

Stock photography, fictitious stories, real lives...



PS3 LISTING



game	issue	score
3D Collection	195	75%
3D Dot Game Heroes	192	87%
50 Cent: Blood On The Sand	177	70%
Ace Combat: Assault Horizon	211	78%
Afro Samurai	177	61%
Agarest: Generations Of War	187	78%
Agarest: Generations Of War Zero	209	52%
Air Conflicts: Secret Wars	208	58%
Alice: Madness Returns	207	57%
Aliens Vs Predator	189	79%
Alone In The Dark	173	70%
Alpha Protocol	193	83%
Ape Escape	208	55%
Arcana Heart 3	207	79%
Armored Core For Answer	173	65%
Armored Core 4	153	67%
Army Of Two	164	80%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	188	65%
Ar Tonelico Qoga: Knell Of Ar Ciel	203	27%
Ashes Cricket 2009	183	30%
Assassin's Creed	161	58%
Assassin's Creed II	186	89%
Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood	199	91%
More than enough additions to take the Assassin's Creed formula into modern classic territory.		
Assassin's Creed Revelations	212	75%
Atelier Rorona: The Alchemist Of Arland	198	77%
Backbreaker	193	70%
Band Hero	187	68%
Batman: Arkham Asylum	183	85%
Batman: Arkham City	211	94%
Rocksteady's sequel to the excellent Arkham Asylum is a serious contender for game of the year.		
Battle Fantasia	176	67%
Battlefield: Bad Company	168	78%
Battlefield: Bad Company 2	190	93%
Single-player is fairly impressive but take it online and it's bordering on genius. This is quite possibly the best shooter on PS3 today.		
Battlefield 3	212	88%
Bayonetta*	187	93%
Beijing 2008	168	54%
Beowulf	161	61%
Bionic Commando	179	82%
BioShock	172	93%
BioShock 2	189	88%
BlackSite	163	43%
Bladestorm: The Hundred Years' War	160	58%
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger	190	85%
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift	198	94%
Blazing Angels	151	54%
Bleach: Soul Resurrección	209	63%
Blitz: The League II	172	67%
Blur	193	86%
Bodycount	210	54%
Borderlands	185	80%
Brink	206	67%
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	171	75%
Brütal Legend	185	79%
Bulletstorm	203	86%
Burnout Paradise	162	74%
Buzz!: Quiz TV	168	82%
Buzz! Quiz World	185	70%
Call Of Duty 3	151	77%
Call Of Duty: World At War	173	68%
Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	160	88%

game	issue	score
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 2	186	94%
A questionable single-player mode is rendered null and void by the best multiplayer we've ever played.		
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 3	212	88%
Call Of Duty: Black Ops	199	94%
Treyarch's first genuinely brilliant entry to the series and a standard-bearer for fast-paced online shooters.		
Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood	181	85%
Call Of Juarez: The Cartel	208	30%
Captain America: Super Soldier	208	70%
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow	197	85%
Cars 2	208	68%
Catherine*	204	48%
Champion Jockey	210	50%
Chronicles Of Riddick: Assault On Dark Athena	178	87%
Child Of Eden	211	80%
Civilization Revolution	168	90%
Clash Of The Titans	193	65%
Clive Barker's Jericho	159	84%
Colin McRae: DiRT	158	91%
Colin McRae: DiRT 2	184	87%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3	178	65%
Conan	160	71%
Condemned 2	165	78%
Conflict: Denied Ops	164	50%
Create	199	71%
Cross Edge	182	59%
Crysis 2	204	72%
Damnation	181	38%
Dance Dance Revolution	201	52%
Dante's Inferno	189	80%
Dark Sector	165	62%
Dark Souls	211	90%
Sequel to one of the hardest games in recent times, Dark Souls is another superb release from developer From Software.		
Dark Void	188	81%
Darksiders	188	83%
DC Universe Online	202	80%
de Blob 2	203	65%
Dead Island	210	79%
Dead Rising 2	197	78%
Dead Rising 2: Off The Record	211	61%
Dead Space	172	87%
Dead Space 2	201	92%
The point where the Dead Space series stepped up and became something to be genuinely excited about.		
Dead To Rights: Retribution	192	68%
Def Jam: Icon	151	79%
Def Jam Rapstar	199	72%
Demon's Souls	193	92%
Destroy All Humans!: Path Of The Furon	178	29%
Deus Ex: Human Revolution	209	91%
Worries: unfounded. Fun: lots of it. True Deus Ex experience: confirmed. Boss battles: bloody awful.		
Devil May Cry 4	163	89%
DiRT 3	206	85%
Disgaea 3: Absence Of Justice	175	81%
DJ Hero	186	91%
It's just like playing Guitar Hero for the first time all over again, although DJ Hero is slightly more expensive.		
DJ Hero 2	198	88%
Dragon Age: Origins	186	82%
Dragon Age II	203	86%
Dragon Ball: Raging Blast	186	40%
Dragon Ball Z: Burst Limit	168	61%
Driver: San Francisco	209	68%
Duke Nukem Forever	207	33%
Dungeon Siege III	206	80%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam	160	40%

game	issue	score
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 2	176	43%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 3	208	56%
Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce	189	37%
Dynasty Warriors 6	164	30%
Dynasty Warriors 6: Empires	181	44%
Dynasty Warriors 7	204	32%
EA Sports Active 2	200	81%
EA Sports MMA	198	89%
Eat Lead	178	38%
EDF: Insect Armageddon	208	64%
El Shaddai: Ascension Of The Metatron	208	77%
Enchanted Arms	152	69%
Enemy Territory: Quake Wars	168	60%
Enslaved: Odyssey To The West	197	83%
Eternal Sonata	176	87%
Everybody's Golf 5*	158	88%
Everybody's Golf: World Tour	165	91%
Eye Of Judgment	159	65%
EyePet	185	83%
EyePet: Move	197	84%
F1 2010	197	86%
F1 2011	211	71%
FaceBreaker	170	55%
Fairytale Fights	186	51%
Fallout 3	173	97%
Fallout 3 lives up to its promise and then some. It's a damning portrayal of the consequences of war, and a compelling RPG experience.		
Fallout: New Vegas	198	88%
Fantastic Four: Rise Of The Silver Surfer	155	39%
Far Cry 2	172	74%
F.E.A.R.	151	81%
F.E.A.R. 2: Project Origin	176	87%
F.E.A.R. 3	208	60%
FIFA 08	159	84%
FIFA 09	171	87%
FIFA 10	184	90%
FIFA 11	197	91%
FIFA 12	210	86%
FIFA Street 3	163	66%
FIFA World Cup 2010	192	70%
Fight Night Champion	203	88%
Fight Night Round 3	151	87%
Fight Night Round 4	181	84%
Final Fantasy XIII	190	85%
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage	198	51%
Folklore	158	66%
Formula One Championship Edition	151	72%
Fracture	171	72%
Front Mission Evolved	198	52%
Fuel	180	49%
Full Auto 2: Battlelines	151	69%
G-Force	183	59%
Genji: Days Of The Blade	151	38%
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	83%
Ghostbusters: The Videogame	180	80%
GI Joe	183	22%
God Of War Collection*	188	93%
Two of the greatest PS2 action games of all time come together at a bargain price. Essential purchase.		
God Of War Collection: Volume II	210	70%
God Of War III	190	88%
Gran Turismo 5	200	85%
Gran Turismo 5 Prologue	165	75%
Grand Theft Auto IV	166	98%
Green Day: Rock Band	194	77%
GTA: Episodes From Liberty City	191	94%
Guitar Hero III	160	90%
Guitar Hero III is another great rhythm-action beast, sure to delight fans and newcomers alike. So, grab a guitar and rock out!		
Guitar Hero 5	184	81%
Guitar Hero: Aerosmith	168	63%
Guitar Hero Greatest Hits	182	76%

This month's new entries

The newest games, freshly squeezed among all your old favourites

Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 3 **PS3**
Assassin's Creed Revelations **PS3**
The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim **PS3**
Battlefield 3 **PS3**
Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception **PS3**
Sonic Generations **PS3**
The House Of The Dead: Overkill **PS3**
Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom 3 **PS3**
WWE '12 **PS3**
The Adventures Of Tintin: The Secret Of The Unicorn **PS3**

88% Rayman Origins **PS3** 80%
75% Spider-Man: Edge Of Time **PS3** 38%
93% The Sims 3: Pets **PS3** 70%
88%
90% Castlevania: Harmony Of Despair **PSN** 67%
70% Rocketbirds: Hardboiled Chicken **PSN** 82%
75% NBA Jam: On Fire Edition **PSN** 64%
78% inFamous: Festival Of Blood **PSN** 76%
50% Euforia **PSN** 85%
58%

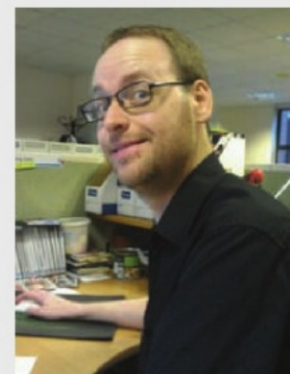
game	issue	score
Guitar Hero Metallica	179	88%
Guitar Hero: Van Halen	189	65%
Guitar Hero: Warriors Of Rock	197	71%
Guitar Hero World Tour	173	95%
Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows: Part 1	200	21%
Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows: Part 2	208	37%
Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince	182	60%
Harry Potter: The Order Of The Phoenix	155	32%
Haze	167	64%
Heavenly Sword	157	71%
Heavy Rain	189	94%
Heavy Rain: Move Edition	198	70%
Heroes Over Europe	184	48%
Homefront	203	69%
Hunted: The Demon's Forge	207	59%
Hyperdimension Neptunia	202	21%
Ice Age 3: Dawn Of The Dinosaurs	182	47%
Ico & Shadow Of The Colossus Classics HD	210	94%
Largely ignored when they were first released, gamers can now enjoy these wonderful games in brilliant HD.		
IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds Of Prey	183	72%
inFamous	180	81%
inFamous 2	207	83%
International Cricket 2010	194	61%
Iron Man	166	58%
Iron Man 2	193	50%
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	59%
James Bond 007: Blood Stone	199	63%
John Cameron's Avatar: The Game	187	64%
John Daly's ProStroke Golf	197	70%
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	159	78%
Just Cause 2	190	87%
Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	160	73%
Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days	196	71%
Katamari Forever	184	88%
Killzone 2	176	93%
Killzone 3	202	80%
Knights Contract	202	53%
Kung Fu Panda 2	207	20%
Kung Fu Rider	196	65%
Lair	158	52%
L.A. Noire	206	91%
Not perfect but Rockstar's new IP introduces pioneering facial-capture technology and interesting gameplay.		
Last Rebellion	191	42%
Legend Of Spyro: Dawn Of The Dragon	174	54%
Legendary	173	62%
Lego Batman	173	65%
Lego Harry Potter: Years 1-4	194	79%
Lego Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures	167	73%
Lego Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	187	71%
Lego Pirates Of The Caribbean	206	76%
Lego Rock Band	187	75%
Lego Star Wars: The Complete Saga	160	76%
Lego Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	204	79%
Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust	180	24%
LittleBigPlanet	172	94%
LittleBigPlanet 2	201	96%
An amazing game and something to get involved with even if you can't create your own stuff.		
Lord Of The Rings: Aragorn's Quest	199	60%
Lost Planet 2	192	75%
Lost Planet: Extreme Condition	163	69%
Lost: The Video Game	164	38%
LOTR: Conquest	175	52%
Madden NFL 07	151	82%
Madden NFL 08	157	82%
Madden NFL 09	170	83%
Madden NFL 10	184	82%
Madden NFL 11	196	84%

game	issue	score
Madden NFL 12	209	85%
Mafia II	196	81%
MAG	189	68%
Majin And The Forsaken Kingdom	199	72%
Marvel Vs Capcom 3	202	88%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance	151	64%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	185	57%
Mass Effect 2	201	97%
Why the hell are you reading this when you should be playing Mass Effect 2 instead? GO GO GO.		
Medal Of Honor	198	86%
Medal Of Honor Airborne	161	85%
Mercenaries 2: World In Flames	171	78%
Metal Gear Solid 4	167	92%
Not the final Metal Gear Solid game after all then. Still brilliant though, and still largely incomprehensible.		
Mobile Suit Gundam: Crossfire	151	37%
Michael Jackson: The Experience	205	58%
Midnight Club: Los Angeles	173	84%
Mindjack	202	38%
Mini Ninjas	184	80%
Mirror's Edge	173	71%
ModNation Racers	192	90%
The best kart racer by far on the PlayStation 3, but combined with incredible levels of creativity. If you love LBP you'll love this, too.		
Monster Madness	170	78%
Mortal Kombat	205	81%
Mortal Kombat vs DC Universe	173	68%
MotoGP 08	172	65%
MotoGP 09/10	190	77%
Moto GP 10/11	204	64%
MotorStorm	151	92%
MotorStorm: Apocalypse	203	76%
MotorStorm: Pacific Rift	172	93%
MX Vs ATV: Alive	206	42%
MX Vs ATV Reflex	189	68%
MX Vs ATV Untamed	164	58%
naïd	201	61%
Naruto: Ultimate Ninja Storm	174	59%
NASCAR 08	157	38%
Naughty Bear	195	64%
NBA 07	153	33%
NBA 2K7	151	76%
NBA 2K8	172	71%
NBA 2K10	186	79%
NBA 2K11	199	82%
NBA 2K12	211	88%
NBA Jam	200	68%
NBA Live 08	158	59%
NBA Live 09	170	81%
NBA Street: Homecourt	151	68%
Need For Speed Carbon	151	76%
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit	199	91%
Hot Pursuit is one of the best arcade racers of all time - pure, unadulterated bliss in game form.		
Need For Speed ProStreet	161	86%
Need For Speed Shift	184	81%
Need For Speed Undercover	173	75%
Nier	192	54%
NHL 2K7	151	80%
NHL 2K9	172	67%
NHL 2K10	186	70%
NHL 09	170	88%
NHL 10	184	85%
NHL 11	198	89%
NHL 12	210	78%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma	154	88%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2	184	82%
No More Heroes: Heroes' Paradise	206	89%
Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising	185	78%
Operation Flashpoint: Red River	205	75%

game	issue	score
Overlord: Raising Hell	167	65%
Overlord II	181	68%
Pain	183	69%
PES 2008	159	70%
PES 2009	172	80%
PES 2010	185	72%
PES 2011	197	73%
PES 2012	210	74%
Phineas & Ferb: Across The 2nd Dimension	211	66%
PixelJunk Racers	160	74%
PlayStation Move Heroes	204	54%
POTC: At World's End	154	48%
Portal 2	205	95%
Another exceptional realisation from Valve, gamers are going to be talking about Portal 2 for a long time to come.		
Prince Of Persia	174	83%
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	193	68%
Prince Of Persia Trilogy	200	88%
Prison Break: The Conspiracy	191	40%
Prototype	181	76%
Pure	171	80%
Pure Football	194	69%
Quantum Of Solace	175	57%
Quantum Theory	197	29%
Race Driver: GRID	167	85%
Racket Sports	198	37%
Rage	211	60%
Rainbow Six Vegas	155	88%
Rainbow Six Vegas 2	164	78%
Rango	203	54%
Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time	186	82%
Ratchet & Clank: All 4 One	211	68%
Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction	160	72%
Rayman Origins	212	80%
Red Dead Redemption	193	92%
Relocates the familiar GTA formula to a superbly realised new setting and, in many ways, is unlike anything else as a result.		
Red Dead Redemption: Undead Nightmare	199	87%
Red Faction: Armageddon	207	62%
Red Faction: Guerrilla	180	80%
Resident Evil 5	177	86%
Resident Evil 5: Gold Edition	190	86%
Resistance: Fall Of Man	151	83%
Resistance 2	173	90%
With its impressive set pieces and glorious multiplayer mode, Resistance 2 is one of the best FPSs on the PS3.		
Resistance 3	210	88%
Resonance Of Fate	191	79%
Ridge Racer 7	151	75%
Rise Of The Argonauts	176	58%
Rock Band	169	94%
Rock Band 2	179	96%
With the incredible tracklist, tweaked engine, and new modes, this is easily the best rhythm-action game currently available.		
Rock Band 3	199	84%
Rogue Warrior	188	09%
Rugby World Cup 2011	209	49%
R.U.S.E.	197	82%
Sacred 2: Fallen Angel	180	76%
Saints Row 2	172	79%
Saints Row: The Third	211	88%
Saw	186	52%
Saw II: Flesh & Blood	198	36%
Sega Mega Drive Ultimate Collection	177	85%
SBK 08	172	55%
SBK 2011	206	70%
SBK X: Superbike World Championship	193	67%
Sega Rally	158	92%
Simply the best rally game on the PS3. Unless simulation is your bag then you'll want to go for Colin McRae. Not much in it, really.		
Sengoku Basara: Samurai Heroes	198	76%

*denotes import review

PLAY'S [FESTIVE] DIARY



DAY 1 Twas the month of Christmas and all through Play's workspace, Andy sat there making this strange face. His cheer was there for all to see, but it made the young ladies turn and flee.



DAY 13 Just shy of two weeks and we turned to Ryan: "bugger off", he said, "for I am quite a shy'un". Pester we did to get a better photo, but all our requests he did say "no" to.

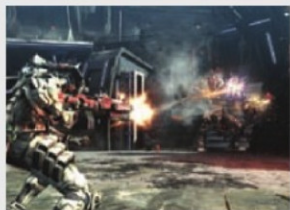


DAY 24 Dan turned around as the epitome of cheer, not looking at all like he really needed a beer. "I don't get to sleep any more", he wept, but four minutes later at his desk he slept.



DAY 25 The chair of Burns was as vacant as his head, and we feared for him that he could be dead. Turned out he wasn't unfortunately, instead just at home enjoying the festivity. Happy whatever you do or don't celebrate, kids.

CULT CLASSICS VANQUISH PLATINUM GAMES, 93%, PLAY 197



It's the game hardly anyone bought – well, nearly a million of you, but relatively speaking that's not many – but is universally loved by those who played it. Well, apart from the few dissenting voices. But they're idiots.



We're not entirely sure why *Vanquish* failed to set the world on fire, especially seeing as that's all you seem to do in the game. Especially with your rocket-boostered ass slides in your future robo-suit of doom. Videogames are brilliant.



And *Vanquish* is a videogame. It's pure, silly and over the top. It's based on bettering yourself, on defeating bigger and bigger enemies and taking on more and more overwhelming odds as you progress. It's pure gaming joy.



But people were put off: £50 for about five hours that I might not replay? Well, yes, if you weren't going to replay it then you have every right to feel a bit hard done by. But things have changed now.



Thanks, in part to the poor sales, *Vanquish* is now available for a pittance. One, single pittance. It's almost more expensive to not buy the game these days. For the good of your gaming soul, buy it for a few quid.

game	issue	score
Shadows Of The Damned	207	79%
Shaun White Skateboarding	198	70%
Shaun White Snowboarding	173	72%
Shellshock 2: Blood Trails	177	32%
Shift 2: Unleashed	204	66%
Silent Hill: Homecoming	174	64%
Simpsons Game	160	82%
SingStar	159	80%
SingStar Guitar	199	70%
SingStar Pop Edition	179	81%
Singularity	195	80%
Skate	159	86%
Skate 2	175	82%
Skate 3	192	86%
Sniper: Ghost Warrior	206	45%
SOCOM: Special Forces	205	63%
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	190	78%
Sonic Generations	212	70%
Sonic The Hedgehog	151	52%
Sonic Unleashed	175	48%
Soul Calibur IV	169	94%
Spider-Man 3	155	33%
Spider-Man: Edge Of Time	212	38%
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions	197	69%
Spider-Man: Web Of Shadows	173	55%
Splatterhouse	200	58%
Splinter Cell Double Agent	153	79%
Split/Second: Velocity	192	90%
Just beating <i>Blur</i> to the chequered flag, <i>Split/Second</i> is a wonderfully intense racing game in the <i>Burnout</i> mould.		
Sports Champions	196	83%
Star Ocean: The Last Hope International	190	63%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	171	65%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II	199	61%
Start The Party!	196	72%
Stormrise	178	51%
Stranglehold	159	65%
Street Fighter IV	176	95%
Super Street Fighter IV: Arcade Edition	207	88%
Stuntman: Ignition	157	82%
SuperCar Challenge	183	66%
Superstars V8: Next Challenge	190	55%
Superstars V8 Racing	181	63%
Super Street Fighter IV	191	90%
The fact that you're buying a lot of stuff you've probably bought already is the only drawback to what is the best fighter ever made.		
Supremacy MMA	211	40%
Tekken 6	184	94%
There are flaws that hurt the experience, but nothing, <i>nothing</i> , stops <i>Tekken 6</i> from being an intense, tactical and brilliant fighting game.		
Test Drive Unlimited 2	203	62%
The Adventures Of Tintin	212	58%
The Beatles: Rock Band	184	96%
The Bourne Conspiracy	168	72%
The Club	163	80%
The Cursed Crusade	211	40%
The Darkness	154	91%
The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	152	91%
The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim	212	93%
WARNING: The latest addition to Bethesda's superb franchise will seriously damage your social life.		
The Fight	199	42%
The Godfather	151	37%
The Godfather II	178	38%
The Golden Compass	162	32%
The House Of The Dead: Overkill	212	75%
The Incredible Hulk	168	52%
The King Of Fighters XII	182	82%
The Orange Box	161	93%
The Saboteur	187	67%
The Shoot	199	76%
The Sims 3	199	87%
The Sims 3: Pets	212	70%
The Sly Collection	200	84%
Thor: God Of Thunder	206	38%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07	151	88%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 08	158	73%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 09	171	86%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10	181	69%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 11	194	60%
Tiger Woods PGA 12: The Masters	204	65%

game	issue	score
Time Crisis 4	166	69%
Time Crisis: Razing Storm	199	58%
TimeShift	162	72%
TNA Impact!	171	71%
Tom Clancy's EndWar	173	80%
Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X.	177	75%
Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X. 2	196	69%
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Classics Trilogy HD	210	78%
Tomb Raider Trilogy	204	86%
Tomb Raider: Underworld	173	83%
Tony Hawk's Project 8	151	85%
Tony Hawk's Proving Ground	160	72%
Tony Hawk: Ride	188	52%
Top Spin 3	168	71%
Top Spin 4	203	60%
Tornado Outbreak	186	56%
Tot Story 3	195	82%
Transformers: Dark Of The Moon	208	64%
Transformers: Revenge Of The Fallen	182	41%
Transformers: The Game	156	34%
Transformers: War For Cybertron	194	80%
Trinity: Souls Of Zill O'll	202	56%
Trinity Universe	194	61%
Tron Evolution	200	17%
Turning Point: Fall Of Liberty	165	40%
Turok	163	46%
TV Superstars	199	53%
Two Worlds II	203	64%
UEFA EURO 2008	165	62%
UFC Undisputed 2009	180	90%
Undisputed is gorgeous to look at, it's incredibly deep, and it's one of the most addictive fighters we've played in ages.		
UFC Undisputed 2010	193	88%
Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom 3	212	78%
Uncharted: Drake's Fortune	161	87%
Uncharted 2: Among Thieves	185	96%
Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception	212	90%
Fans of the series won't be disappointed as Drake returns with some exceptional set pieces and superb action.		
Unreal Tournament III	162	88%
Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom	151	54%
Valkyria Chronicles	173	82%
Vancouver 2010	189	76%
Vanquish	197	93%
A brilliant surprise from the developer of <i>Bayonetta</i> and easily one of the best games we've played in 2010.		
Viking: Battle For Asgard	165	74%
Virtua Fighter 5	151	83%
Virtua Tennis 2009	180	80%
Virtua Tennis 3	150	91%
Virtua Tennis 4	205	79%
Wanted: Weapons Of Fate	179	63%
Warhammer 40,000: Space Marine	210	51%
Warhawk	157	84%
Warriors: Legends Of Troy	202	14%
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	55%
Way Of The Samurai 3	190	16%
Wet	184	41%
Wheelman	178	72%
Where The Wild Things Are	188	56%
White Knight Chronicles	190	55%
White Knight Chronicles II	207	49%
Wolfenstein	183	72%
World Snooker Championship 2007	151	56%
WRC: FIA World Rally Championship	197	76%
WRC 2: FIA World Rally Championship	211	63%
WSC REAL 09: World Snooker Championship	177	67%
WSC Real 11	204	69%
WWE All Stars	204	82%
WWE Legends Of Wrestlemania	178	80%
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2008	159	88%
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2009	173	74%
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2010	185	77%
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2011	199	63%
WWE '12	212	50%
X-Blades	178	54%
X-Men Destiny	211	35%
X-Men Origins: Wolverine	179	71%
Yakuza 3	191	80%
Yakuza 4	203	79%
Yoostar 2: In The Movies	204	60%

game	issue	score
1942: Joint Strike	170	74%
3-On-3 NHL Arcade	177	62%
After Burner Climax	193	91%
Classic, frantic and utterly brilliant arcade action from Sega. A fine example of what the company is best known for.		
Age Of Booty	172	81%
Alien Breed: Impact	196	80%
Alien Breed 2: Assault	201	82%
Alien Breed 3: Descent	204	61%
Anarchy: Rush Hour	194	73%
Aqua Panic	193	68%
Armageddon Riders	207	65%
Back To The Future: It's About Time	204	71%
Battlefield 1943	182	89%
Beat Sketcher	201	85%
Beyond Good & Evil HD	207	86%
Bishi Bashi Special!	175	61%
Bionic Commando Rearmed	169	88%
Bionic Commando Rearmed 2	203	61%
Blacklight: Tango Down	200	64%
Blade Kitten	197	72%
Blast Factor	152	72%
Blokus	202	54%
BloodRayne: Betrayal	211	62%
Blue Toad Murder Files: The Mysteries Of Little Riddle Episode I	188	65%
Blue Toad Murder Files: The Mysteries Of Little Riddle Episode II	188	61%
Blue Toad Murder Files Episodes 4/5/6	193	70%
Bomberman Ultra	185	82%
Braid	188	93%
We had to wait quite a while, but time is what we have plenty of both with and for <i>Braid</i> . Simply brilliant.		
Burn Zombie Burn	178	85%
Burnout Crash	211	79%
Call Of Duty Classic	188	90%
It doesn't have <i>MW2</i> 's polish but it's a great game both as a slice of history and in its own right.		
Calling All Cars	155	81%
Castle Crashers	200	88%
Castlevania: Harmony Of Despair	212	67%
Catan	195	85%
Chime Super Deluxe	203	80%
Comet Crash	186	84%
Comix Zone	210	62%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert	168	70%
Command & Conquer Red Alert: Retaliation	176	55%
Command & Conquer Red Alert 3 Commander's Challenge	185	68%
Command & Conquer	175	44%
Cool Boarders	173	57%
Cool Boarders 2	175	31%
Costume Quest	199	70%
Crash Bandicoot	172	77%
Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped	174	82%
Crash Commando	174	80%
Crash Team Racing	170	79%
Crazy Machines Elements	210	71%
Crazy Taxi	200	80%
Crescent Pale Mist	200	70%
Critter Crunch	188	91%
This is yet another beautiful, cute and high-class puzzler on the PSN that works perfectly and is a joy to play.		
Crystal Defenders	184	48%
Cubixx HD	207	76%
Dark Mist	164	53%
Dead Nation	201	86%
Dead Space: Extraction	203	88%
Dead Space: Ignition	199	47%
DeathSpank	195	83%
Destruction Derby	01	80%
.detuned	186	50%
Digger HD	186	52%
Diner Dash	190	66%
Driver	171	90%
Droplitz	184	91%

game	issue	score
Earthworm Jim HD	196	89%
Eat Them!	202	60%
echochrome II	202	83%
echochrome	169	85%
Elefunk	170	45%
Euforia	212	85%
Explosion	203	70%
Fat Princess	183	65%
Fatal Inertia EX	168	65%
FIFA 09 Ultimate Team	178	61%
Final Fight: Double Impact	193	90%
 This scrolling-fighter classic from 1989 makes an almost faultless appearance on PSN. Stick it on your download list.		
Final Fantasy VII	181	96%
 Even after all these years it still holds up. In fact, our mark seems to have gone up 3% since 1997.		
Final Fantasy VIII	190	90%
Final Fantasy IX	195	90%
Flight Control HD	198	85%
Flock!	179	70%
fIOW	151	90%
 Another 90% game for the PS3, another lesson in simple, addictive gameplay. fIOW is an innovative title available on the Network.		
Flower	176	85%
Frogger Returns	190	35%
From Dust	211	82%
Funky Lab Rat	201	70%
G-Police	27	84%
Gatling Gears	207	62%
Geon	175	71%
Go! Puzzle	152	58%
Gran Turismo HD	150	75%
Gravity Crash	187	85%
Greed Corp	191	75%
GTI Club+	174	72%
Gundemonium Collection	197	80%
Gunstar Heroes	181	85%
Hamsterball	194	72%
Hardcore 4x4	15	81%
Hasbro Family Game Night	187	60%
Heavy Weapon	187	75%
High Velocity Bowling	163	50%
Hi-Octane	178	64%
Hustle Kings	190	87%
Hyperballoid HD	188	70%
inFamous: Festival Of Blood	212	76%
Inferno Pool	181	81%
International Track & Field	171	80%
Interpol: The Trail Of Doctor Chaos	185	48%
Invincible Tiger: The Legend Of Han Tao	185	70%
Jet Rider 2	176	71%
Joe Danger	194	96%
 Simply put, Joe Danger is one of the best games you'll currently find on the PSN. Buy it. Buy it now.		
Judge Dredd	18	19%
Jumping Flash	172	55%
Kick-Ass The Game	194	60%
Kula World	172	71%
Kung-Fu Live	201	42%
Landit Bandit	195	66%
Lara Croft And The Guardian Of Light	198	90%
 Lara is back to her best in The Guardian Of Light. Tomb Raider fans will love it and for just £9.99 everyone else should, too.		
Lead & Gold: Gangs Of The Wild West	193	65%
Lemmings	151	79%
Limbo	209	90%
 We had to wait a while, but just like with Braid it in no way negatively impacts the quality of what is just that - a quality experience.		
Linger In Shadows	173	69%
LocoRoco Cocoreccho!	159	80%
Lumines Supernova	178	90%
Madden NFL Arcade	188	58%
Magic Carpet	179	65%
Magic: The Gathering: Duels Of The Planeswalkers	202	84%
Magic: The Gathering: Duels Of The Planeswalkers 2012	208	70%
Marvel Vs Capcom 2	182	90%
Matt Hazard: Blood Bath And Beyond	189	69%

game	issue	score
Medal Of Honor: Frontline	210	52%
MediEvil	173	45%
Mega Man 9	172	75%
Mega Man 10	192	82%
Metal Gear Solid	187	93%
 While it looks rather rough now, the game itself remains a real high point in the franchise. Simply essential.		
Metal Gear Solid Online	175	45%
Microbot	202	51%
Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition	195	94%
Motorhead	173	60%
Namco Museum Essentials	193	60%
Naruto Shippuden: Kizuna Drive	205	42%
NBA Jam: On Fire Edition	212	64%
Noby Noby Boy	177	85%
Nucleus	155	82%
Numbast	183	60%
N20	37	70%
Outland	207	72%
OutRun Online Arcade	180	80%
Pac-Man Championship Edition DX	201	91%
 Bold, bright, insanely addictive - this re-imagining of the retro classic is an essential addition to anybody's PSN library.		
Pain	183	69%
Peggle	189	94%
PixelJunk Eden	169	67%
PixelJunk Monsters	163	94%
PixelJunk Shooter	187	93%
PixelJunk Shooter 2	204	90%
 If you like challenges, shooting, pixels and junk, then this combines all four of those and adds in several splashes of style as well.		
Piyotama	162	62%
Planet Minigolf	196	58%
Polar Panic	190	65%
Populous: The Beginning	46	70%
Prince Of Persia Classic	173	67%
Puzzle Chronicles	194	70%
Puzzle Dimension	208	81%
Puzzle Quest Galactrix	181	68%
Q*bert	58	53%
Rag Doll Kung Fu: Fists Of Plastic	179	83%
Rampage: World Tour	29	77%
Ratchet & Clank: Quest For Booty	170	69%
Rayman	01	76%
Renegade Ops	211	78%
Resident Evil 4 HD	210	93%
 One of the best games ever made comes to PSN. Unfortunately it also brings with it a rather high price tag.		
Resident Evil Code Veronica X	211	72%
Revenge Of The Wounded Dragons	191	60%
Riff: Everyday Shooter	162	86%
Risk: Factions	202	80%
Rocketbirds: Hardboiled Chicken	212	82%
Rocket Knight	194	74%
Rocketmen: Axis Of Evil	165	63%
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse Episode 1	194	90%
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse Episode 2	194	92%
 This is even better than the first episode due to the fact it has better puzzles and even funnier dialogue.		
Sega Rally Online Arcade	208	74%
Savage Moon	175	87%
Scott Pilgrim Vs The World	197	77%
Section 8	193	78%
Section 8: Prejudice	209	80%
Shank	197	86%
Shatter	183	91%
Sheep	171	78%
Siren Blood Curse	170	62%
Smash Cars	184	50%
SOCOM Confrontation	178	55%
Soldner-X 2: Final Prototype	195	70%
Sonic 4: Episode One	199	82%
Sonic Adventure	198	63%
Spin Jam	174	32%
Syphon Filter	48	93%
Snakeball	176	92%
Stacking	203	88%

game	issue	score
Star Trek: D-A-C	189	57%
Street Fighter Alpha: Warrior's Dream	159	57%
Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike Online Edition	209	92%
 The best version of one of the best fighting games ever released, or something. We don't know, mainly because Ryan isn't writing this.		
Street Skater 2	178	40%
Super Puzzle Fighter II HD Turbo Remix	168	78%
Super Rub-A-Dub	151	83%
Supersonic Acrobatic Rocket-Powered Battle-Cars	177	65%
Super Stardust HD	155	74%
Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix	176	72%
Switchball	191	75%
Swords And Soldiers	199	88%
Syphon Filter 3	170	80%
Tales Of Monkey Island	196	91%
Tank Battles	186	68%
Tekken HD	150	80%
Tekken 5: Dark Resurrection Online	161	87%
Tetris	202	84%
The Baconing	210	72%
The Last Guy	171	91%
The Punisher: No Mercy	182	49%
The Secret Of Monkey Island Special Edition	195	92%
 LucasArts' classic point-and-click adventure gets an HD makeover and will hopefully be the first of many classics heading to PSN.		
Theme Hospital	32	80%
Theme Park	174	80%
TMNT: Turtles in Time Re-shelled	186	57%
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six	54	34%
Top Darts	202	71%
Top Gun	198	53%
Topotai: Spinning Through The Worlds	183	61%
ToyHome	162	31%
Trash Panic	181	79%
Trials Of Topaq	159	50%
Trine	184	85%
Tumble	198	70%
Under Siege	207	71%
Uno	189	85%
Vagrant Story	189	82%
Vandal Hearts: Flames Of Judgment	192	87%
Wakeboarding HD	192	65%
Warhawk: Operation Fallen Star	171	80%
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	55%
Wipeout	01	89%
Wipeout HD	172	84%
Wolfenstein	181	70%
Worms	179	91%
 There's a reason Worms is still going strong, and that's because people never get tired of its fun personality and addictive gameplay.		
Worms 2: Armageddon	198	87%
Worms Battle Islands	201	80%
X-Men Arcade	203	60%
Yar's Revenge	206	57%
Zuma	182	78%

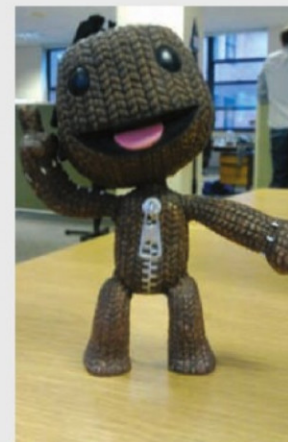
PSP mini LISTING

A Space Shooter For Two Bucks	202	55%
Alien Havoc	186	68%
Angry Birds	202	93%
 Flinging birds at stuff for four times the price of the original in a less-functional fashion than before has never been so much fun.		
Bloons	186	65%
Brainpipe	186	70%
BreakQuest	186	45%
Edge	202	85%
Field Runners	186	85%
Fortix	186	57%
Funky Punch	186	49%
Hero Of Sparta	186	57%
I Must Run!	202	70%
Kahoots	186	88%
NOVA: Near Orbit Vanguard Alliance	202	63%
Pinball Fantasies	186	90%
 Pinball Fantasies was originally released on the Amiga and features four tables and some excellent pinball gaming.		
Puzzle Scape	186	75%

DID YOU KNOW?



OUR MAIN DUALSHOCK 3 pad has this sticker on it. Why? Well, as genius game journalists from the future, we are frequently awarded prizes by Sony for our sheer brilliance. This sticker signifies our ability to carry two fat PS3s at the same time. SKILLS.



SACKBOY (NOT PICTURED) was originally designed as a sack with a boy inside it. Unfortunately, Media Molecule saw fit to change this design, citing the original one as being 'horrific'. The original designer was removed from their duties and immediately exiled.

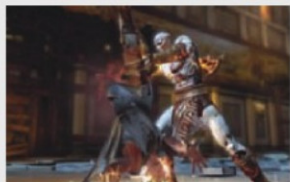


THE PLAY DVD is specially formulated in a laboratory environment to provide a positive and enlightening experience. Other DVDs from lesser magazines have been known to cause serious brain inflammation, at least in laboratory mice and the terminally stupid.



THE TERM 'BLU-RAY' was coined by Sony after a long deliberation period, in which literally thousands of different names were considered. Eventually an executive at the company happened on a list of discarded names for the BBC show *Blue Peter*, and the rest is history.

GAMING CLICHES & VIDEOGAME LOGIC VIOLENCE



It's shocking we didn't think to point this out before, what with it pervading about 99% of all games ever released. It's one of the clichés to end all clichés and is *the* perfect example of gaming logic: violence.



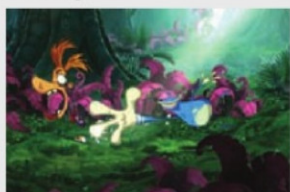
Think of a game, then think whether it involves some level of violence – bashing, punching, shooting, smacking, slapping or whatever – it's hard to think of many games that don't have it. Though that's not to say they don't exist.



Obviously you've got *Tetris*, and most tennis games (not the ones where the ball can hit you) and some kids games. But generally speaking? Well, generally speaking we're told violence is indeed the answer. Even if it's not the question.



But violence is also the perfect example of gaming logic. How do you solve a problem? Well, what's the problem? Doesn't matter: use violence. No matter how loveable the game or how relatable the characters, violence is usually The Way.



We're not complaining – at least not in the way those godawful news rags do. We'd just like to see more mainstream releases that don't rely on endless swathes of death in order to show a player they are progressing or doing things right.

game	issue	score
Sky Force	202	68%
Tetris	186	93%
How it is possible to make Tetris feel so fresh and so much fun again we don't know, but it's managed here.		
Vampire	186	67%
Who's That Flying?!	202	64%

PSP LISTING



300: March To Glory	152	59%
Ace Combat X	147	72%
Ace Combat: Joint Assault	194	79%
After Burner: Black Falcon	152	82%
Ape Academy 2	145	52%
Ape Escape P	140	37%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	190	45%
Assassin's Creed: Bloodlines	187	77%
Astonishia Story	142	68%
Beaterator	186	72%
Blade Dancer: Lineage Of Light	145	45%
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger Portable	194	84%
Blood Bowl	184	53%
Bomberman	150	83%
Boulder Dash: Rocks!	165	69%
Breath Of Fire III	138	82%
Brothers In Arms: D-Day	149	69%
Burnout Dominator	153	65%
Burnout Legends	134	94%
Buzz! Brain Bender	175	68%
Capcom Classics Collection Reloaded	147	80%
Capcom Classics Collection Remixed	141	72%
Cars	143	60%
Castlevania: The Dracula X Chronicles	163	78%
Championship Manager	137	65%
Championship Manager 2006	140	32%
Cid The Dummy	180	32%
Coded Arms	134	53%
Call Of Duty: Roads To Victory	153	69%
Colin McRae Rally 2005 Plus	134	84%
Crisis Core – Final Fantasy VII	167	87%
Crush	154	80%
Dante's Inferno	191	76%
Dead Or Alive: Paradise	192	56%
Disgaea: Afternoon Of Darkness	161	92%
Dissidia: Final Fantasy	184	60%
Dissidia 012 Final Fantasy	203	79%
Disgaea 2: Dark Hero Days	190	87%
Dragon Ball Z: Shin Budokai 2	154	50%
Driver 76	154	68%
Dungeons & Dragons: Tactics	159	55%
Dungeon Siege: Throne Of Agony	148	85%
Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce	179	69%
EA Replay	147	74%
echochrome	169	85%
echoshift	191	73%
Everybody's Golf 2	167	86%
Everybody's Tennis	195	88%
Every Extend Extra	145	84%
Exit	138	65%
EyePet	199	77%
F1 2009	187	66%
Field Commander	145	83%
FIFA 06	136	43%
FIFA 07	147	81%
FIFA 11	198	69%
FIFA World Cup 2010	193	65%
Fired Up	134	60%
Final Fantasy	164	63%
Final Fantasy IV: The Complete Collection	204	80%
Final Fantasy Tactics	159	86%
FlatOut: Head On	164	79%
Football Manager 2007	147	62%
Football Manager Handheld 2008	161	49%
Football Manager Handheld 2010	187	60%
Formula One 06	143	78%
Frantix	136	36%
Gangs Of London	144	65%
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	42%
Ghost Recon Predator	200	60%
Ghostbusters: The Video Game	188	55%
Ghostbusters: Sanctum Of Slime	204	51%
Gitaroo Man Lives!	144	79%
Gladiator Begins	206	52%
Go! Sudoku	137	45%
Gods Eater Burst	202	88%
God Of War: Chains Of Olympus	165	84%

*denotes import review

game	issue	score
God Of War: Ghost Of Sparta	199	79%
Gradius Collection	144	80%
Gran Turismo	184	85%
Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars	185	95%
GTA: Liberty City Stories	135	95%
GTA: Vice City Stories	147	96%
Half-Minute Hero	191	87%
Hard Corps: Uprising	204	78%
Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire	136	69%
Hellboy: Science Of Evil	170	60%
Holy Invasion Of Privacy, Badman!	186	73%
What Did I Do To Deserve This?	186	73%
Hot Pixel	155	73%
Indiana Jones And The Staff Of Kings	181	60%
Infected	141	68%
Innocent Life: A Futuristic Harvest Moon	154	70%
International Athletics	170	40%
Invizimals	187	71%
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	59%
Juiced: Eliminator	141	70%
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	160	80%
Kao Challengers	137	60%
Killzone: Liberation	146	83%
Kingdom Hearts: Birth By Sleep	196	88%
Lemmings	138	63%
LittleBigPlanet	186	90%
LocoRoco	143	94%
LocoRoco 2	173	82%
LocoRoco Midnight Carnival	186	81%
Lord Of Arcana	202	65%
Lumines II	137	74%
Madden NFL 06	137	74%
Marvel Trading Cards	155	38%
Me And My Katamari	138	86%
Medal Of Honor Heroes	147	72%
Medieval Resurrection	134	53%
Mercury Meltdown	145	66%
Metal Slug Anthology	150	91%
Metal Gear Acid 2	138	92%
Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker	193	92%
A fantastic entry in the <i>Metal Gear Solid</i> series and one of the best games on PSP. Wonderful.		
Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops	150	91%
Miami Vice	144	82%
Micro Machines V4	142	71%
Might & Magic: Clash Of Heroes	205	84%
ModNation Racers	193	70%
Monster Hunter Freedom	140	81%
Monster Hunter Freedom 2	157	59%
Monster Hunter Freedom Unite	181	77%
Moon Diver	205	46%
MotoGP	146	75%
Motorstorm: Arctic Edge	184	72%
Mytran Wars	179	85%
Namco Museum Battle Collection	136	68%
Naruto Shippuden Legends	185	46%
Naruto Ultimate Ninja Heroes 2	169	46%
NBA Ballers: Rebound	139	61%
Need For Speed Undercover	175	57%
No Heroes Allowed	199	69%
OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast	139	93%
PaRappa The Rapper	155	88%
Patapon	163	86%
Patapon 2	177	87%
Patapon 3	205	81%
Patchwork Heroes	192	85%
Pirates Of The Caribbean	143	52%
PixelJunk Monster Deluxe	185	86%
Pro Evolution Soccer 2008	163	77%
Pocket Racers	144	49%
PoPoLoCroIS	142	71%
Power Stone Collection	145	88%
PQ – Practical Intelligence Quotient	141	52%
Prince Of Persia Revelations	138	69%
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	194	52%
Prinny: Can I Really Be The Hero?	181	80%
PSN Collection: Power Pack	173	70%
PSN Collection: Puzzle Pack	173	54%
Pursuit Force	134	83%
Pursuit Force: Extreme Justice	159	76%
Puzzle Chronicles	190	61%
Puzzle Quest	153	66%
R-Type Tactics	170	74%
Rainbow Six Vegas	156	78%
Ratchet & Clank: Size Matters	154	78%
Red Faction: Battlegrounds	205	78%
Rengoku 2	144	72%
Resistance: Retribution	177	76%
Ridge Racer 2	145	78%

game	issue	score
Ridge Racer	132	91%
Rock Band Unplugged	181	92%
Rocky Balboa	150	68%
Secret Agent Clank	169	79%
Sega Mega Drive Collection	177	79%
Sega Rally	158	90%
Shin Megami Tensei: Persona 3 Portable	206	78%
Shinobido: Tales Of The Ninja	150	60%
Silent Hill Origins	160	87%
Silent Hill: Shattered Memories	190	52%
Slam Bolt Scrappers	204	73%
Smash Court Tennis	154	58%
SOCOM Fire Team 2	154	70%
SOCOM: Fireteam Bravo 3	190	71%
SOCOM: Tactical Strike	160	85%
SOCOM: US Navy SEALs Fireteam Bravo	140	69%
Sonic Rivals	147	70%
Sonic Rivals 2	162	35%
Soul Calibur: Broken Destiny	183	92%
New modes and characters keep things interesting, while fights are as hectic and solid as ever.		
Spider-Man 3	162	32%
Spinout	149	81%
Splinter Cell: Essentials	139	71%
Split/Second: Velocity	200	71%
SSX On Tour	138	76%
Star Ocean: Second Evolution	178	78%
Star Trek: Tactical Assault	148	59%
Star Wars Battlefront II	137	74%
Star Wars Battlefront: Elite Squadron	187	65%
Star Wars: Lethal Alliance	148	69%
Star Wars: Renegade Squadron	160	78%
Street Fighter Alpha 3 Max	138	70%
Street Riders	140	29%
Super Monkey Ball Adventure	142	54%
Swarm	204	78%
Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror	140	90%
Tekken 6	187	90%
Fantastic to look at and fast and fluid to play. <i>Tekken 6</i> is the best game of the series on PSP.		
Tekken: Dark Resurrection	143	92%
Tactics Ogre: Let Us Cling Together	202	81%
Tenchu: Shadow Assassins	179	71%
Tenchu: Time Of The Assassins	146	51%
The 3rd Birthday	203	80%
The Con	153	59%
The Cube	153	64%
The Eye Of Judgment: Legends	191	57%
The Godfather Mob Wars	136	66%
The Lord Of The Rings: Tactics	136	66%
The Sims 2	137	71%
TNA Impact! Cross The Line	189	58%
TOCA 3	152	70%
Tokobot	140	79%
Tomb Raider: Anniversary	156	81%
Tomb Raider: Legend	140	72%
Twisted Metal Head-On	134	54%
UFC Undisputed 2010	197	80%
Ultimate Ghosts 'N Goblins	145	88%
Undead Knights	189	46%
Untold Legends: The Warrior's Code	140	59%
Valhalla Knights	158	49%
Valkyria Chronicles 2	196	87%
Valkyrie Profile: Lenneth	153	78%
Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble	140	82%
Virtua Tennis 3	152	88%
Warhammer 40,000: Squad Command	161	70%
What Did I Do To Deserve This My Lord!? 2	192	78%
WipEout Pulse	159	86%
WipEout Pure	138	91%
Exceeding all of our expectations as to what a handheld <i>WipEout</i> game could be, <i>Pure</i> is an essential PSP purchase.		
World Of Pool	156	43%
World Tour Poker	141	67%
World Tour Soccer 2	142	40%
Worms: Open Warfare 2	157	80%
WWE SmackDown! Vs. RAW 2006	137	84%
WWE SmackDown! Vs. RAW 2007	147	80%
World Rally Championship	134	67%

GAMES OF THE YEAR

2 BATMAN: ARKHAM CITY

ISSUE 211, 94%

Even with the great expectations placed upon it, *Batman: Arkham City* proves that dreams really can come true – packed with fan detail and insanely fun.



3 DEUS EX: HUMAN REVOLUTION

ISSUE 209, 91%

It managed to live up to the monstrous reputation of the original, weaving play-your-own-way shooting into one of the most gorgeous-looking games of the year.



4 PORTAL 2

ISSUE 205, 95%

How could *Portal* improve without breaking what made it successful? By Valve literally smashing its own formula apart and making it the funniest game ever made.



5 UNCHARTED 3: DRAKE'S DECEPTION

ISSUE 212, 90%

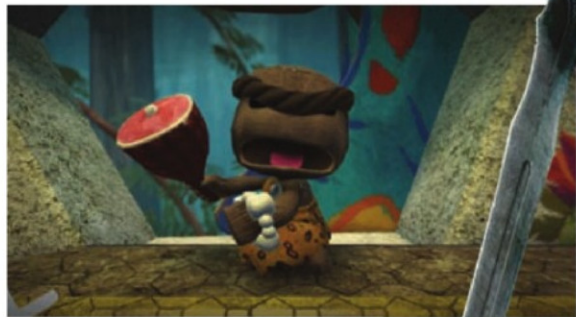
It doesn't have the same wow factor as *Uncharted 2* but still has some of the best set pieces in any game, the best visuals and is now backed up by incredible multiplayer.



7 LITTLEBIGPLANET2

ISSUE 201, 96%

This glorious game is good as a platformer and shines as a make-your-own-creation toolbox. If anything lives up to Sony's Play, Share, Create mantra, it's this game.



9 MASS EFFECT 2

ISSUE 201, 97%

BioWare's action-RPG has memorable set pieces, unpredictable story, great action and an incredibly high level of polish.



1 ELDER SCROLLS V: SKYRIM

ISSUE 212, 93%

Big, ambitious and strangely personal, *Skyrim* is a game that will reward different players in millions of different ways. It's been part of daily office conversation since release.



6 L.A. NOIRE

ISSUE 206, 91%

Opinion has been split by players of this massively polarising title yet everyone can agree that the attention to detail, storytelling and acting is of a level never seen before.



8 BATTLEFIELD 3

ISSUE 212, 88%

Ignore the awful single-player and play the outstanding multiplayer. Jets, tanks, collapsing buildings and the same amazing multiplayer the series built its name on.



10 SAINTS ROW: THE THIRD

ISSUE 211, 88%

Deliriously stupid, *Saints Row: The Third* is pretty much Videogames: The Videogame and seems to exist with the sole purpose of slapping an oversized grin on your face.



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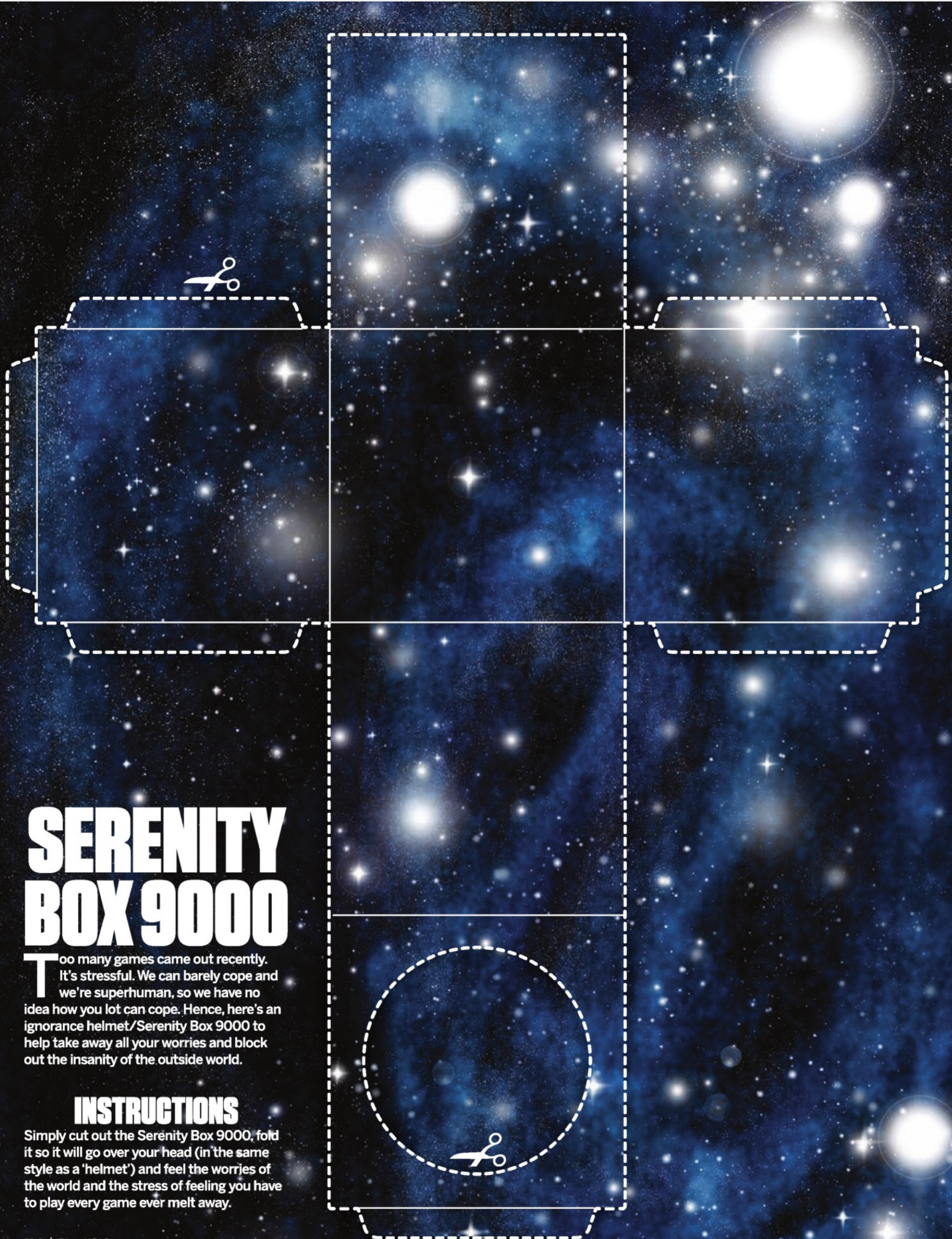


SERENITY BOX 9000

Too many games came out recently. It's stressful. We can barely cope and we're superhuman, so we have no idea how you lot can cope. Hence, here's an ignorance helmet/Serenity Box 9000 to help take away all your worries and block out the insanity of the outside world.

INSTRUCTIONS

Simply cut out the Serenity Box 9000, fold it so it will go over your head (in the same style as a 'helmet') and feel the worries of the world and the stress of feeling you have to play every game ever melt away.



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